



# 3

## CHAPTER

# The SCO: Aims, Objectives and Importance for India's Foreign Policy

### THE SCO: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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The SCO has been established by the Chinese as their pet multilateral project in the region of Eurasia. The SCO has gained significance in recent times owing to resurgence of Russia (as examined previously) and because of expansion of Chinese economic presence in the region. As examined earlier, the Chinese had multiple aims while establishing the SCO. Firstly, they wanted to resolve boundary disputes with Central Asians when the Cold War ended in terms that inspired confidence in the republics so that Chinese got coalesce them into their economic orbit. Secondly, the Chinese wanted to take the Central Asians into confidence to prevent any rise of separatism in Xinxiang, thus Central Asia was seen as a grand neutralising buffer. Thirdly, the Chinese established their own version of a grand strategy and wanted to exploit the resources of Central Asia in the post-Soviet space. When the Cold War ended, the initial motivation of China was to establish a steel wall that would prevent the crumbling of disintegrating Soviet Union to fall upon the Chinese. However, as the decade of 1990s unfolded, the Chinese began to play their cards well. They realised that the Russians are going to be occupied in tackling the West and this leaves a power vacuum that Chinese can fill in Central Asia. The fading away of Russia immediately after the end of Cold War also exposed the rising asymmetry in power which Chinese thought could be exploited for their own advantage. This is why the Chinese attempts of resolving the border, which began under the orbit of Shanghai-5, eventually manifested as bringing Central Asia into their strategic foothold, thus the SCO came and Chinese envisaged a leadership role for themselves. The Russians found themselves naturally allied to the Chinese endeavours of SCO. This is so because since the end of Cold War, there was a constant pressure by NATO to expand eastwards and add the East European nations, once a part of Soviet Union, into the American security embrace. Russia was neither able to control nor able to effectively offer security the eastern European region. This led the Russians to embrace Chinese and SCO as a counter-balancer. Similarly, what also motivated the Russians to embrace SCO and China was the luring potential of supplying oil and gas to markets in Asia, which now represented new centres of growth in the post-Cold War world order. Thus, Putin, leading Russia decided to achieve the common goal of ensuring unity and striving for working with friends in Asia. The Central Asians since the end of the Cold War also struggled to stand up on their own feet. During the Cold War, the Central Asians were comforted with security guarantee by Russia; the same immediately vanished when Soviet Union disintegrated and as a result, the Central Asians felt a security void which the SCO tried to fulfil and in this respect, the SCO became the driver of Chinese grand strategy in Central Asia.

The Chinese, as explained earlier, decided to solve the boundary disputes with Central Asians after the Cold War ended. To do this, the Chinese created an institutional mechanism known as the Shanghai-5. Apart from developing a consensus on boundary dispute, the Shanghai-5 also devoted enormous diplomatic capital to resolve the irritants of separatism, extremism and fundamentalism. As the Chinese began to diplomatically work on the agenda of Shanghai-5, it almost became clueless on how to respond to 9/11. The 9/11 came as a full-blown blot of fundamentalism on face of China and Central Asia. The SCO, which was created in 2001, was almost redundant when the US launched the global war on terror.



After the 9/11, the SCO could not establish a coherent response because it lacked resources, institutional mechanisms, intra-political conflicts in Central Asia and lack of experience of Russia and China to work in multilateral frameworks.

### What is Global War on Terrorism?

It was an American grand project to bring together a host of friends and allies after the devastating 9/11 attacks to dismantle the roots of terrorism emanating in the world. The narrative built was that the terrorism in all forms globally would be dismantled. However, as the war unfolded, the US only removed Al-Qaeda and Taliban from Afghanistan and launched an offensive invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein.

Thus, the Chinese decided to infuse a new set of energy in SCO to make it appear relevant to Western presence in the region post-9/11. The Chinese came out with the concept of 'Shanghai Spirit' to signify the new energy that would coalesce Central Asia, China and Russia. A great sense of optimism was displayed by the Chinese and Russians to make SCO relevant in the wake of presence of Western troops in the region, something that both of them resented. The West saw the Shanghai Spirit as an attempt to salvage the assortment of Central Asians with the West. The Russians and Chinese began to spread a narrative that the American presence in the region in the pretext of war on terror is an attempt to re-impose the Western hegemony. This trick worked effectively in mobilising insecure Central Asians into the tighter grasp of SCO. The West was using the territories and air bases of Central Asians to launch offensive operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. This use of territory was converted into a fear by Russians and Chinese who spread a narrative that the US will soon seek regime changes in the Central Asia. The American attempts to foster democracy in Kyrgyzstan through the Tulip revolution confirmed the fears of Central Asians. Thus, the SCO decided to pass a resolution that members of the SCO will firmly reject the interference in affairs of other countries' internal affairs and reject any models of social development that are imported into the region, an indirect reference to the US and their attempts to promote democracy.

The question also arises is how does India benefit from joining the SCO. For India, the SCO provides an opportunity to protect its own interests in Afghanistan, especially after the takeover of Taliban in 2021. With entry of Pakistan into SCO and growing convergence of Russia and Pakistan means that Pakistan will now become an important player in Eurasia and Indian presence in the SCO as a full member can help keep a check on nefarious designs of Pakistan. The presence of India will allow its access to intelligence reserves of RATS of SCO and this will help India develop better understanding of potential fundamentalist movements in Central Asia. While maintaining a bilateral road to engage with Central Asia, the SCO will also bestow India an opportunity to engage with Central Asians at a multilateral level. By being in SCO, India can also provide valuable growth levers for the Central Asian region by offering them solutions of information technology and banking. Also, India's wide experience in engaging with multi-institutional settings at the global level will contribute in strengthening the institutional settings of SCO. India will also be able to better understand the rising non-traditional security threats of Central Asia and devise effective solutions and thereby make SCO a futuristic platform for tackling non-traditional security threats, a novel contribution of India in SCO and a counter to Chinese security layers. Thus, India in SCO is definitely seen coming out of the tight geopolitics of managing a confrontationist China and hostile Pakistan. However, it must be noted that India's journey in the SCO is not going to akin to flying with a flock of 'wild geese'. India's interests in the SCO will invariably come into a clash when either Pakistan or China props up some connectivity initiative. If India develops rigidity and initiates a stance to oppose the proposals, then India will portrayed as an obstructionist and Pakistan will seek more sympathy. This will also allow China and others to balance off India in the SCO by asserting that other Asian states such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc. be given memberships in SCO. Thus, navigating this regional diplomacy will be a bigger challenge for India than any other multilateral institution it has engaged in the last 76 years.

## THE SCO: PAX SINICA OR ASIA'S OWN MULTILATERAL GROUPING

The West perceived the SCO as an 'informal league of dictators', protected by the Chinese and Russians. The West began to see the SCO as a block where the innocent Central Asians were lured into a trap and have become victims of high-handedness of China. To challenge the tag of being an informal league of dictators, the SCO decided to open up their membership and brought India as a member in 2017. The presence of India was seen by Russia and China as an attempt to counter the American narrative of the grouping. If the things did not end here, a new rivalry began to emerge. The Russians gradually began to see SCO as an upfront threat to their EEU. A new Cold War seems to have opened up between Russia and China where the two are aggressively trying to assert themselves over resources, energy, oil and gas. This new quest of competitiveness for regional diplomacy is eroding the SCO today and making the cooperation more difficult. The main



problem today is that both China and Russia view the SCO differently. The Russians wanted the Chinese to treat the SCO as a grouping to provide regional security only. The Russians were willing to allow this strategic space to be built by the Chinese. However, the Chinese, on the other hand, have seen SCO as a template to visualise an international order based on Chinese characteristics. For China, the SCO offers it an opportunity to display to the world a new form of international relations they would like to envisage in counter to the US. This is why China sees India in SCO as an attempt to balance off the US. This is because the Chinese today believe that SCO is used by the US to encircle them and prevent them to display any global role. The Chinese are more driven by building engagements with like-minded countries in the region by bringing them on the SCO to ensure that they act as bulwarks to American plan. This is why the SCO is seen as Pax Sinica and not a new multilateralism in Asia. It is in this backdrop that the Russians are extending the engagement with Japan to ensure that China does not venture deep into the heart of Eurasia, which Russia feels is its own strategic backyard. As Russia focuses more on EEU, China focuses on BRI, and the contradictions in the future are imminent. Given the complexities in the SCO we have analysed, tagging SCO as Asian-NATO is a pure misnomer. Despite all attempts to showcase military readiness in SCO, the military might of the regional grouping stands nowhere near NATO. This also explains why the SCO is unable to establish a coherent response to any security concerns in the region. With India and Pakistan joining the SCO, the security cooperation is all the more difficult not just because of serious diplomatic differences between India and Pakistan but also because of military skirmishes between India and China that have taken their bilateral relationship to the lowest ebb. In this backdrop, the presence of India in SCO, while seen from a balancing and democratic perspective does make sense, but till the time SCO itself lacks a coherent strategic congruity, the presence of India is not likely to make much of a difference in the regional architecture. Though it has often been stated that presence of India, China, Pakistan and Russia on a common platform such as SCO can help the conflicting parties resolve their differences; but in reality India has always clarified that it will prefer to resolve the bilateral issues at a bilateral and not at a multilateral level. The SCO is thereby seen as a weak institution for conflict resolution platform for bilateral disputes also weak. For that matter, it was quite ironic to even observe that Central Asians were not comfortable in having India and Pakistan as members of SCO because the coming of the two would lead to the group becoming hostage to geopolitical rivalries of South Asia. The discussion clearly points out that the objectives and aims of SCO and role members such as India can play in SCO remained ill-defined till date (a detailed discussion on India and SCO lies in the next chapter). India has received support from Moscow in SCO and the US too. The Americans favour Indian participation in the SCO to keep a check on Chinese. This has created a lot of ambiguities on what role can the grouping play in the post-pandemic world order considering that the SCO had hardly any cooperative achievement to showcase in the two years of pandemic. The future of the SCO obviously hinges upon how Russia–NATO–China decide their understanding of Central Asia and how India–Pakistan and China display maturity in keeping their Asian rivalry baggage back home and coming together to foster the growth of Central Asia and Eurasia as a region. Most importantly, it can be concluded that the SCO in its present form does provide for a delicate equilibrium for members of the region to navigate the post-pandemic and post-Cold War world order.

## **FUTURISING CENTRAL ASIA UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF SCO IN POST-PANDEMIC GLOBAL ORDER**

As the things evolve in Central Asia in the post-pandemic world, there have been notable changes in regional power games. The Americans have understood that they will not benefit anything by having a narrowly focussed policy on Afghanistan alone. They are also sensitive to Russian presence in Central Asia and have decided to let go promotion of democracy and human rights in Central Asia for the time being and have decided to nurture Central Asia at the levels of commerce and connectivity and bring Central Asia at the fulcrum of Asian and European growth stories. The Chinese under their BRI have decided to use SCO as a platform to achieve their infrastructural and energy security goals. The experts argue that with this thinking, there is a possibility of Central Asia falling into a 'resource curse' because Central Asia is being viewed by the Chinese and Americans as transits for growth of Asia and Europe. The history has been a proof that any power in Central Asia, which is an outside power in the region, has never achieved any monopoly and attempts for dominance in Central Asia have gone against regional integration and unity. With rising ecological stress, non-traditional security threats not being addressed and excessive focus on resource exploitation; the local populations are becoming restive and SCO is not able to respond to these challenges, which have the potential of making these Central Asian states vulnerable to the external subversions. It will be interesting to see that how CSTO of Russia and SCO of China will offer security in the



era of these rapidly changing security dynamics. The other game being unfolded is that at a covert level, the Americans seem comfortable to promote and push SCO because they prefer a weakened security control of Russia in Central Asia. The American ambition is driven by the fact that with Chinese at the security helm, the Americans can tilt Central Asians towards Europe, away from Russia. This is also likely as an outcome because the Chinese focus on using SCO is only to ensure that there is no restive activities in Xinxiang as Chinese are not interested in offering a broad spectrum of security to Central Asia. The Chinese also do not consider the idea of Russian floated Eurasia and EEU because both go against the Chinese ambition of BRI. The Russians, aware of the American and Chinese plans, are appearing to counter the same by courting Pakistan and Taliban in Afghanistan. If Russia succeeds in legitimising Taliban, then with the support of Pakistan, Russia will be able to counter the strategic designs and ensure that it remains a crucial security provider in Central Asia even with SCO at the helm.





# 4

## CHAPTER

# India's Relations with Central Asia: Regaining Strategic and Security Centrality

## THE INTERRUPTED PERIOD OF RELATIONSHIP

The ancient relations between India and Central Asia were deeply nourished during the medieval period. As stated earlier, the foundation of the Mughal rule in India owes its origin to Central Asia. However, with the coming of the British and the advent of the 'great game', the civilisational connection between India and Central Asia witnessed an interruption. The trade and expeditions did continue in the period but the historical and civilisational values that were core binders of India and Central Asia, were lost all together. Much of the writings explaining Indian and Central Asian relations during the 20th century have Soviet Union leanings. This is so because the relation between India and Central Asia were guided by Soviet Union during the Cold War. The Central Asians had also participated in the first Asian Relations Conference and they also fondly remember the visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to Central Asia in 1955 with his daughter Indira Gandhi. The visit left such a deep imprint in the minds of Central Asians that many families, for many successive decades, named their daughters Indira, which remains a localised name in Central Asia till date. During the period of Cold War, India continued to exercise considerable cultural influence in the region through films and music. The Indian films were the only scope of cultural outlet for the people of Central Asia. Despite the entry of Western films since the end of Cold War, Indian films in Central Asia continue to exert enormous cultural influence in Central Asia.

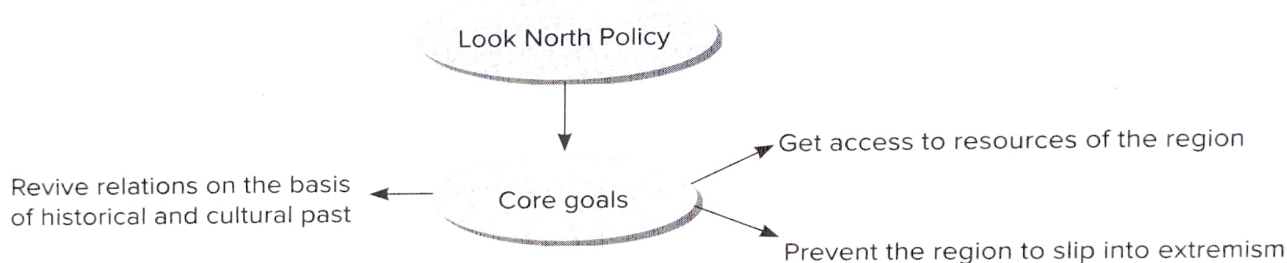
## BUDDHISM AS A NEW SOURCE OF INFLUENCE

In the preceding chapters, it has been argued that Buddhism came to Central Asia because of the silk route. The Central Asians were initially Buddhists and Islam was a late entrant in Central Asia. The Central Asians, in this context, have rejected any radical versions of religious interpretations because they have been nurtured in co-existing with Buddhism. In recent times, Buddhism is emerging as a new source of influence and connection because the nations are interested in reviving the past-historical legacy. The most important role in this regard is apparently being played by the Chinese who are trying to position themselves as the biggest patron of Buddhism in the region. The Chinese are not just using Buddhism to boost their regional influence but also use the soft power advocacy to pump their global ambitions. The Buddhism has emerged as a new psychological foreign policy tool of the Chinese in engaging in the region today. In this backdrop, India, which for some time has lost this emotional space of Buddhism to China, needs to reconnect. The Indian government today is conceptualising a strategy on how it can use academic exchanges as a new source of influence. The focus of New Delhi is to re-invigorate the past linkages with Central Asia by focusing on intellectual aspects of Buddhism, an element not worked on by the Chinese today. India is poised to resort to an Asian renaissance through promotion of living heritage of Buddhism with Central Asia. An important element of this strategy is inviting the scholars and historians of Central Asian nations to India to assert an academic discourse. The end objective of India in this regard is to start working with Central Asia in excavation of Buddhist sites and re-assert a new element of soft power play.



## INDIA'S LOOK NORTH POLICY

As the Cold War ended, the five Central Asia Republics gained independence from Russia, giving them the needed strategic and autonomic space to explore relationships with other countries independent of the Russian yoke. India, on the basis of its historical and cultural proximity to Central Asia, now began making overtures again to unlock potential alliances. India concluded fresh diplomatic treaties with all the five Central Asia Republics. Domestically, India made a transition from a closed to an open economy, and also began to feel the need of acquiring resources for sustaining its own economic growth. Thus, Central Asia became all the more significant for India as the region was a highly resource-rich one. But as the Central Asia Republics had just gained independence, one of the foremost concerns for India was to ensure that the region should not get engulfed in any form of religious extremism due to the US Mujahideen campaign in Afghanistan. There was a high possibility of a spill over of these extremist elements from Afghanistan into Central Asia in 1989 (after USSR withdrew from Afghanistan) as a majority of the Central Asian states were Islamic. India feared that if Central Asia were to be engulfed by this extremism, it would give Pakistan an edge in maintaining strategic depth against India. Thus, India realised that it has to ensure that the region did not become a security concern for India. It began to realise that its own democracy, secular outlook and its own multicultural polity are its assets which it can use for promotion in Central Asia as the newly independent Central Asians would look for some role models to emulate. Since Central Asia was a cultural and a religious mosaic of multiple groups, India could use the modalities of democracy, secularism and multiculturalism as core ideals for Central Asia to take lessons from. In 1995, P. V. Narsimha Rao visited Turkmenistan and reiterated the common cultural legacy of the two nations to re-establish relationships. In his visit to Turkmenistan, Rao unveiled India's Look North policy.



## CHALLENGES IN LOOK NORTH POLICY

As time progressed, the security situation in the Central Asia region deteriorated. Afghanistan fell into the hands of the Taliban in 1996. Indian fears were exacerbated as Pakistan recognised Taliban rule in Afghanistan. The extremism from Afghanistan also spilled over into Tajikistan, which saw a civil war taking place. From the Pakistani side, there was an aggressive attempt to revive militancy in Kashmir in 1990s. India, Russia and Iran supported a group known as the Northern Alliance. India built a hospital near the airbase of Farkhor in Tajikistan. The military hospital provided medical assistance to the Northern Alliance. India also used the Ayni air base for the purpose of providing humanitarian assistance and aid. In the process, India-Tajik security cooperation strengthened over bilateral relations. However, as the region was in the grip of extremist forces, assertion of Look North Policy goals became increasingly difficult. In 1999, India's security vulnerabilities were woefully exposed when IC-814 was hijacked. The situation in the region changed after 9/11. The US invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. The US began to develop airbases and military logistic centres in Central Asia for its global war on terror. India also realised the difficulty in the promotion of the goals planned under the Look North Policy and began to understand that Look North Policy could never be a successful policy to engage with Central Asia. By this time, around 2000–2001, the Indian economy, which had made a transition from a closed to an open economy a decade back, had begun to bear fruit. India was in dire need of resources to propel its economic growth. Thus began the search for Indian foreign policy tools, which would help it, look at Central Asia in a different way.



## ASSESSMENT OF LOOK NORTH POLICY

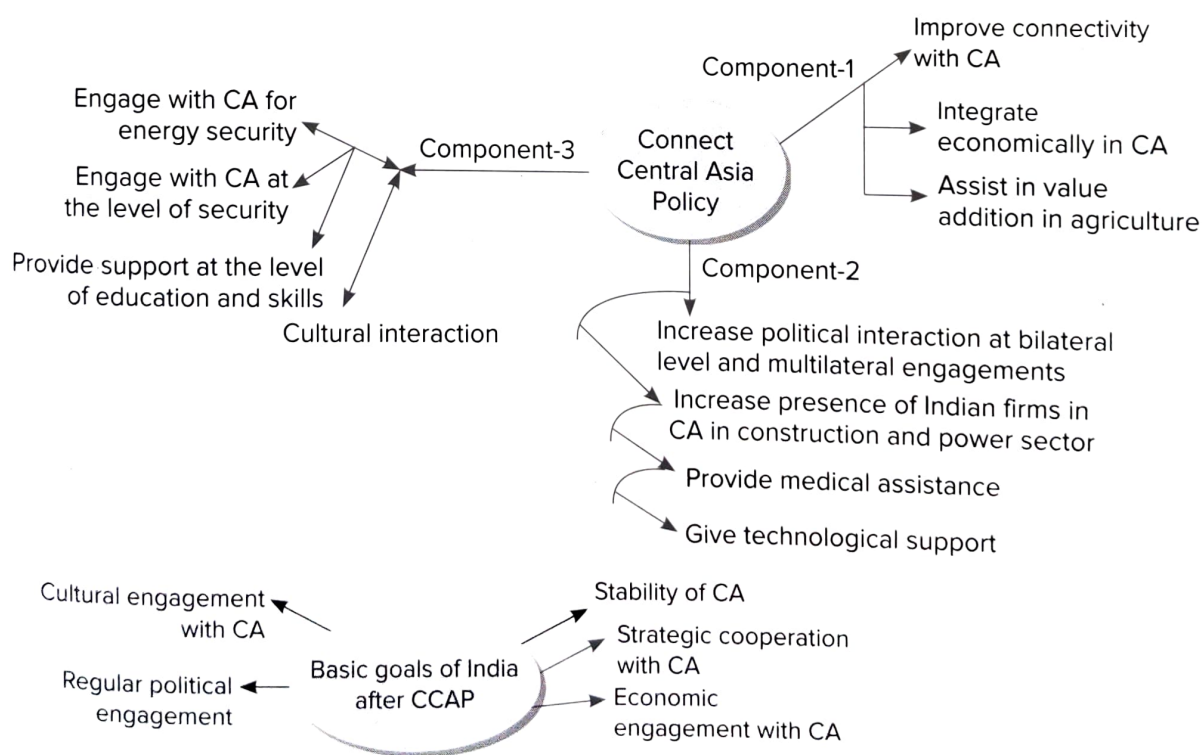
As outlined above, the deterioration of the security of the region was a colossal concern. The civil war in Tajikistan, the takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban, Pakistan-sponsored militancy in Kashmir and support to Taliban were all noteworthy factors. However, many diplomats today agree, that apart from these reasons, India itself did not aggressively prioritise this region at the end of the Cold War. When the Cold War ended, the foremost priority of India was to improve relations with the US to fill the vacuum left by its past proximity to the erstwhile USSR. Thus, a mixture of all these factors made the implementation of Look North Policy weak.

### Why did Look North Policy Remain Weak?

India initiated the Look East Policy, where the majority of its focus was directed to its Eastern neighbours. India not only neglected due attention to Central Asia, but the deteriorating security situation of Central Asia also made India to think of it from a purely security point of view than from the perspective of any economic significance.

## INDIA'S CONNECT CENTRAL ASIA POLICY

As the Indian economy began to show signs of growth, India's hunger for resources also began to grow. For India, rebuilding a relationship with Central Asia using different parameters became important. India now realised that in order to get resources from Central Asia, it needed a reorientation of its policy. The new policy had to be based on economic diplomacy. As the region continued to remain fragile, however, India understood that the security component has to remain a part of the new engagement. India also found that the space for economic engagement with Central Asia was very limited by the pre-existing inroads China had made into Central Asia. China had been engaging with Central Asia republics economically since the end of Cold War. Thus, the challenge for India now was to chart out a balanced engagement in Central Asia. In order to do this, the Indian Council of World Affairs undertook a Track-II initiative called India– Central Asia Dialogue. On 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012, the Minister of State for External Affairs of India, during an address (at the first India– Central Asia Dialogue) in the city of Bishkek in Kyrgyz Republic, announced the Connect Central Asia Policy (CCAP). The new policy has the following goals:



## INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA SUMMIT 2022 AND INDIA'S 4C FORMULA

It was a ministerial level summit that was attended by the External Affairs Ministers of India, Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic,

### Outcomes of India-Central Asia Virtual Summit 2022

In 2022, the virtual summit between India and Central Asia aimed to focus on connectivity and security. The Central Asians have reposed faith to engage with India after takeover of Taliban in Afghanistan because they were worried of return of Islamic terrorism in their territories.

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. To improve coordination on economic- and policy-related matters, a new Regional Development Group has been established between India and Central Asia. As Pakistan has been an obstruction between India and Afghanistan, in 2017, the two had established an air corridor to transport goods including perishable items. On the basis of the tremendous success of the air corridor, India has decided in the Dialogue to establish a similar air corridor with Central Asian Republics. The major focus of the dialogue was how to interlink India-Iran-Afghanistan to Central Asia to enhance trade and commerce. There was thrust on promoting connectivity and also cooperate on tackling terrorism. An important announcement by India was to provide for a two-week training for diplomats of the five Central Asian States at the Foreign Services Institute in New Delhi. To enhance the developmental diplomacy, India has decided to extend Line of Credits to Central Asia in the dialogue. India also signed an agreement with Uzbekistan for supply of uranium (second state to do so after Kazakhstan). On the lines of the European Schengen visa, Kazakhstan has proposed the silk visa. This will

enable India to seek a role in enhancing people to people ties with the region, eventually enhancing the connectivity. In this backdrop, India announced the 4C formula of enhancing Connectivity, Commerce, Capacity enhancement and Contacts.

## STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF CENTRAL ASIA FOR INDIA

The region of Central Asia has enormous strategic and economic interests for India. The region is already witnessing a host of external powers that are contesting for geoeconomics. In this backdrop, India is not interested in any sort of clash of interests but has defined its posturing with the region in more strategic terms. The primary driver of India to deepen political relationship with Central Asia since the end of Cold War is to ensure that no forces inimical to interests of India have a free run in Central Asia. The chief concern of India in Central Asia is to ensure that Pakistan gets no space in using fertile lands of Central Asia to nurture terrorists and use them against Indian interests. It is important to understand that as India deepens its engagement with Taliban-led Afghanistan and Central Asia, there exists high possibility of Pakistan using terrorist launch pads to dismantle growing economic profile of India in the region. The Pakistanis have resorted to a proxy war against India in Afghanistan and potential extension of the same in Central Asia is also possible. The Chinese have often, in support of Pakistan, tried to arouse the locals in Central Asia to talk about Kashmir issue. The local vernaculars, often funded by Pakistani and Chinese intelligence agencies, have carried features related to 'fate of Kashmiri people' and have displayed sympathy to Kashmiri cause. The game played by India's adversaries is to arouse the Central Asians with Kashmiri cause and pin down India's use of cultural and civilisational diplomacy by asserting that India is anti-Muslims. India's continuous political engagement with leaders

### What are Pakistani Interests in Central Asia and how are they Anti-India?

Pakistan has tried to support proxy war against Indian economic interests in Afghanistan and Central Asians fear a similar tactic in their land as their engagement with India increases. This is so because, Pakistan has nurtured an ambition to Islamise Central Asia and position itself as a leader of Islamic world in the region.

of Central Asia is Indian tactic to nullify the Chinese and Pakistani subversion. India's strategy to mitigate any adversity in Central Asia is driven by a policy mix involving political cooperation, trade incentives and cultural engagement with Central Asia. India's key policy is also to provide Central Asia with aid and technical support to not only skill their populations but also create ample amount of job opportunities in Central Asia. The logic of this move is that Central Asian people are busy in livelihoods, then any attempts by Pakistan to harm Indian development activity will be seen by people of Central Asia as inimical to their interests. Unlike China, which sees itself as replacing Russia as a security provider in Central Asia, Indian interests are more related to ensuring that nefarious designs that may be inimical to security of India are neutralised. This policy also keeps India out of the regional geoeconomic and geostrategic power play and thus prevents India from being tagged as an exploiter of Central Asian resources. It is not wrong to argue that even Central Asians have preferred to engage with India and are knowledgeable about India's concerns with Pakistan; but the Central Asians do



not look at engagement with India as a counter-balancing force to any external player in the region. An issue in India's Central Asia outlook is that India continues to look at Central Asia from the Western prism and despite a deep historical and civilisational link, no effort has been made to evolve an understanding of social, cultural and language aspects of Central Asians; which unfortunately have created void spaces in India's strategic outlook for the region. However, India has looked at the region as an extended neighbourhood and security, energy, connectivity and political engagements remain the fulcrum of Indian policy.

## INDIA'S UIGHUR POLICY AND INDIA'S OPTIONS FOR XINXIANG

In 1950s, many people from East Turkistan (the present day Xinxiang region) escaped the persecution of People's Republic of China (born in 1949). These people came in huge numbers to Ladakh and Leh. When China saw this, they sent their agents via Aksai Chin to Indian Leh and these agents massacred 2000 Uighurs by food poisoning. This created a deep shock in the Uighurs who had crossed over. Some decided to stay back in Leh but some managed to seek asylum in Turkey and Germany. The political and foreign policy practitioners in India have started working upon this fact in raising a counter to Chinese Uighur suppression. The Uighurs are once again in news. The 9/11 has highlighted that how restive Uighurs could create an arc of instability in the region. The proximity of India's Kashmir to Xinxiang is a cause of worry for India because any Uighur mass uprising will have security concerns for India's Kashmir. Pakistan, driven by its cross-purposes with India, has an active role to play in shaping Uighurs. Pakistan would do everything possible to make Xinxiang an area to pin down Indian aspirations. While Chinese are certainly concerned about Uighurs and want to use SCO to convince Central Asians and others to resist them; but Chinese use double speak tactics. At one place they call Uighur uprisings as acts of terror and on the other hand, they support Pakistani groups that attack other states. This strategy of China is in sync with their approach of using terrorism to expand their geopolitical interests. The repeated confrontation between India and China on Pakistani-sponsored terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad compelled India to allow a group of Uighur political activists to speak at a gathering in India. By conceptualising an issue to grant a visa to Uighur human right activist Dolkun Isa, India conveyed to Chinese in clear terms that they will not buy the Chinese definitions of selective terrorism and India reserves the right to hit the Chinese where it hurts them the most. By the issue of Dolkun Isa, India has communicated indirectly to the Chinese that India has considerable assets in hand and can choose to up the ante in Xinxiang at the time and place of its own choice. India had maintained a consulate in Kashgar till 1950s and continues to have enormous historical, cultural and religious inklings with Uighurs in Xinxiang. India must utilise these assets to establish listening posts and some hard ground assets to neutralise any Chinese adventures against India. India continues to nurture those Uighurs who came to India in 1950s and has supported their families. India must continue to nurture their contacts in Kashgar, Khotan and Turfan. India is also devising diplomatic strategies to clearly delineate the Uighur and Turkic nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism. The Chinese are conveniently wrapping the Uighurs as Islamic fundamentalists while leaving the real Islamic Wahhabi Islamic fundamentalists nurtured by Pakistan. This division of streams will help India diplomatically checkmate the Chinese.

## THE CHINESE BRI IN CENTRAL ASIA, SECURITY CONCERNS OF INDIA AND INDIA'S POLICY OPTIONS

The Chinese and Central Asians are having deep levels of economic enmeshments. Any stance of cooperation of Central Asia with China or confrontation with China will have consequences for India. Today, the Chinese are undertaking mass diversion of waters from Ili and Irtysh Rivers of Central Asia to Xinxiang. This water is diverted to maintain the huge inflow of Han Chinese into Xinxiang. This water diversion has created ecological stress in regions that are proximate to India's northern borders. Any future confrontation of locals on water crisis with China will have security implications on India. The continued economic cooperation between Central Asia and China under the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative is a cause of concern for India. This is so because the Chinese are investing very heavily in creating rail-road and infrastructure projects in regions that border India's Kashmir. This will allow the Chinese to mobilise troops against India in case of a future confrontation with India and this will have military implications for India because India is nowhere a part of these global level transport corridors built near our frontiers. In this backdrop, India has to reconfigure the way it looks at Central Asia. It has to understand that in any policy foray India does in Afghanistan, it should involve Uzbekistan,

Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. The conference of National Security Advisors of Central Asian states, Afghanistan and India in 2022 was an attempt to achieve this objective. The Central Asian states bordering Afghanistan must be brought in by India in forging a regional consensus as that will reduce the influence that the Chinese could exercise. India must invest considerable diplomatic capital to develop ties with Ismaili Shias and Nur-Bakshia-Sufis who reside in Pamirs, Hindukush and Gilgit-Baltistan region. There is one school of thinkers in India who argue that India can explore options by engaging in the Belt and Road Initiative. They assert that doing so will enable India to reconnect with the northern axis, which has been prevented to India by the loss of Gilgit-Baltistan to Pakistan by the British through the operation Datta Khel (Refer to *Internal Security* by Pavneet Singh, published by McGraw Hill Education, for more contextual analysis of the operation). In this sense, any logical connectivity initiative must cross through traditional India and Central Asian routes and be via Xinxiang. India can use the BRI to champion the 'energy highway' that may start from West Siberia to north India, cutting via Central Asia and coastal China. The proponents here argue that this is an immediate option which India can work upon by engaging with Russia and Central Asia and prevent any attempts of encirclement by China. One school of thought even asserts that India can work on establishing India-China Silk Route Corridor (ICSRC) where India can champion a mega connectivity plan driven by energy, trade, connectivity, fibre optics and communication highways. In any scenario, it is imminent for India to widen the security lens and broaden the conceptual parameters to include Central Asia and Eurasia in its strategic thought.





# India's Hunt for Energy, Commerce and Connectivity with Central Asia

Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, which are both geographically proximate to the Caspian Sea, possess enormous hydrocarbon potential. These nations have tremendous scope to fulfil India's hunger for energy. This explains why in 1990s, OVL opened its office inside the Indian Embassy building in Kazakhstan and has been relentlessly pursuing oil exploration in the Kazak territory. However, the Indian oil diplomacy in Kazakhstan failed miserably. There are various factors that explain Indian failure. Firstly, India's aspirations in the region were built on misplaced conceptions. India was of the belief that its historical and civilisational ties will enable India to make these forays easier as the nations would give India a priority. However, since the end of Cold War, there have been Americans and Chinese who have entered these energy markets in a big way. While the Americans have been led by their corporate giants, the Chinese oil diplomacy is state driven and India's OVL is miniature in terms of corporate profile in front of these big sharks. The Indian experience in Kazak is a clear indication that the cultural rhetoric need not always materialise into strategic considerations and has shown India the limits of civilisational diplomacy. The deeper reasons for the setback for India were that India never tried to take Russians onboard, despite knowing that Russia remains the dominant player in the region. India tried course correction in 2009 by inviting the Kazak Head of the State to India as the chief guest of the important Republic Day celebrations. Indian negotiators wanted to clinch deals on oil and atomic energy supplies. However, unfortunately, the PM, who often receives the State Guests, could not make a visit because he had to undergo an immediate coronary surgery. This caused immense diplomatic awkwardness and put the incoming Head of the State, who often was known for self-aggrandising character, in an ostentatious scenario. India has also understood that instead of pursuing oil from Kazakhstan, it should focus on cheap gas supplies from the state. Because, firstly, Kazak is a big supplier of oil to Europe and China is reluctant to allow India to have access to cheap oil as it makes enormous profit in existing sales. Thus, India may not enjoy any preferential treatment here. Secondly, Kazak has tremendous gas reserves and as of now, it does not have much gas buyers. As India tries to diversify its energy mix and switches over to gas as a cleaner fuel than oil, Kazak can play an important role in supplying unsold gas to India. The other area where Kazak is interested in engaging with India is nuclear realm. Kazak has tremendous reserves of uranium and India in 2015 signed the deal for a supply of 5000 metric ton uranium annually



from Kazakhstan. The Kazaks also follow a no-strings attached policy and do not require India to be part of international nuclear agreements such as Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The nuclear cooperation can also be seen through the Russian prism because Russia is a big player in India's nuclear industry and Russia will be more comfortable to see Kazak supply nuclear raw material to India. Secondly, Russia also has a deep control over the Kazak nuclear mining, production, enrichment and reactors. In this sense, the Russians are direct beneficiaries in the nuclear commerce between Kazak and India. This is one of the lessons we have identified above, which was missed by India's diplomacy with Central Asia earlier.

## CHALLENGES FOR INDIA'S ENERGY DIPLOMACY IN CENTRAL ASIA

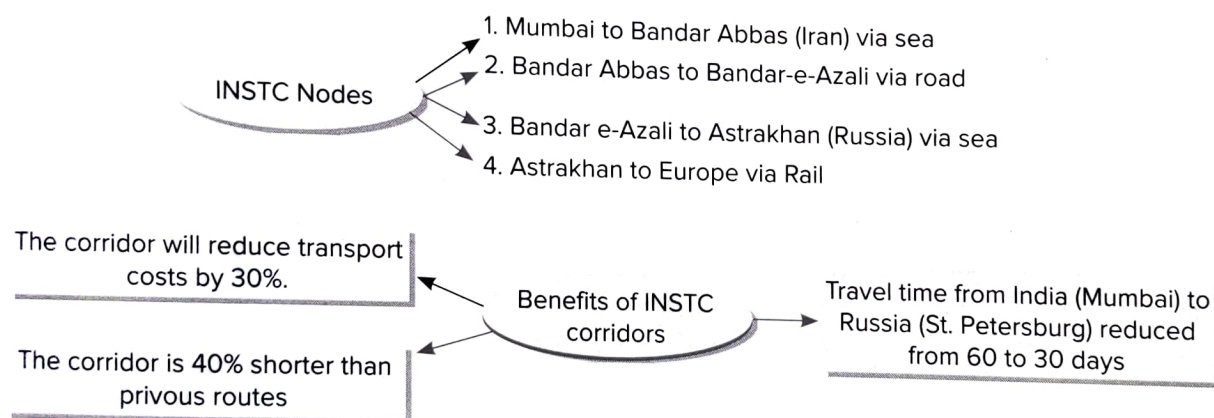
India's experience in navigating energy diplomacy in Central Asia has given an important lesson for our policy makers. India has learned that any energy diplomacy in Central Asia cannot be done on historical or civilisation reasons but will be influenced by geopolitical considerations. India has also understood that the best way to navigate the Central Asian energy quagmire is to seek Russian support because directly or indirectly, Russia continues to have a strong hold on Central Asian energy and this factor is crucial how India approaches energy diplomacy in Central Asia. India would always be a net gainer if it takes Russia into consideration because Russia too wants to limit the Chinese influence in energy markets of Central Asia. In this backdrop, Russia can always support India and India will be a net gainer in this strategic balancing of geopolitical equations of Russia and China. Thus, the valuable lesson for India is that it cannot discount Russia in any of its future policy endeavours in Central Asia. Russia and Kazaks do consider India as a reliable and a trustworthy partner than China, but often assert that India is not a good performer. This 'good performer' is a term often mentioned in private conversations between Indian and Russian diplomats and Russians intend to convey that India must not seek any preferential treatments owing to historical connection and must be decisive enough to bid for resources in open markets and compete with Chinese and Americans. This is a serious cause of concern for India because even under its developmental diplomacy, India has not been able to do anything which is a game-changer. This implies that despite a paltry developmental assistance that India often grants to Central Asia, the Central Asians still remain economically and socially dependent upon China and Russia. This has been viewed by Central Asians as a negative point because they opine that India is not serious enough to help Central Asians gravitate outside the dependencies of Russia and China and help them stand on their own feet. The other problem is that Central Asia is merely a subject of continual intellectual curiosity in India and no serious efforts are made in India to understand the regional culture, language, political system, business rules and taxation policies. Despite the much touted and hyped TAPI pipeline, it is surprising to see that both India and Pakistan are willing to take economic losses in return for political and strategic gains. The Indian side is apprehensive that if the TAPI pipeline is built, Pakistan will not allow smooth passage of pipeline in its territory. India believes that the transit fees that Pakistan will generate for allowing the passage of oil through their territory will be routed to fund terrorism against India. Thus, despite Russian enthusiasm to materialise the pipeline and score some brownie points globally in helping the conflict resolution, India and Pakistan remain apprehensive of the fate of pipeline. In ultimate analysis, it can be stated that while some successes have been achieved in sourcing energy from Central Asia for India but Central Asia will not remain the last solution for India's energy needs for the time being. In this backdrop, the present Union government in India is approaching Central Asian theatre by looking at the larger geopolitical angle. It has understood that focusing on Kashmir and development of infrastructure within the country will become pathways that would allow India to integrate to Central Asia in future more easily and the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, must be seen in this larger geopolitical context.

## INDIA'S EURASIA POLICY, CONNECTIVITY DIPLOMACY, ASHGABAT AGREEMENT AND INSTC CORRIDOR

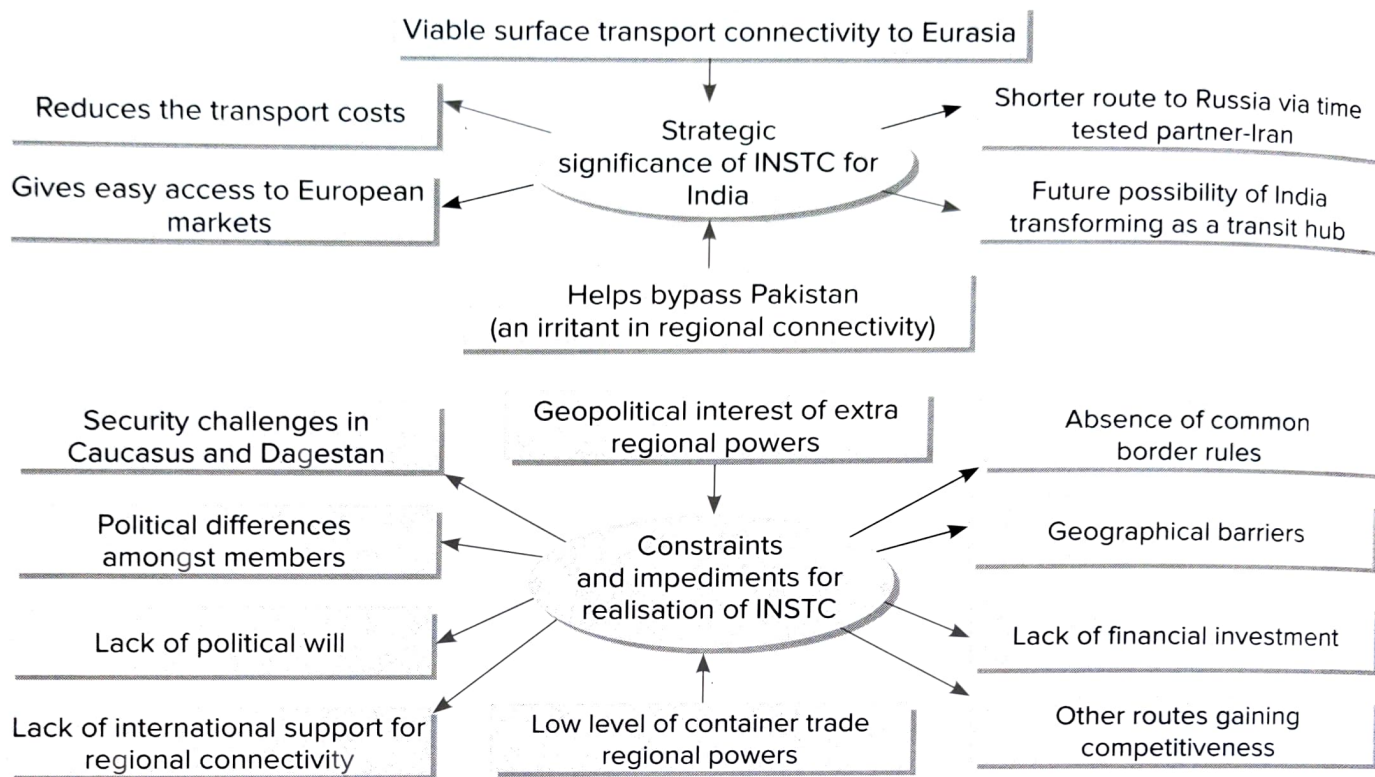
The biggest hurdle for India to reach Central Asia is access to direct land connectivity. On the other hand, the recent Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has put India in a quandary. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a part of BRI, which India has opposed citing violations of territorial sovereignty, has been hushed aside by Chinese who call the corridor as a livelihood project for the region. When India opposed BRI, the Chinese tried to build a narrative that India is against connectivity diplomacy. This narrative is quite surprising because India has had its own Eurasian outreach plans. In fact, India has often communicated at multiple platforms that it is willing to take part in BRI-related projects provided the Chinese show sensitivity to divert the CPEC through the non-disputed areas. India needs to perform



some creative diplomacy. India must support Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh, which together constitute 82% of Kashmir, at the centre-stage of its connectivity diplomacy as doing so can potentially blunt the Chinese narrative on Kashmir and CPEC. Parallely, India must work on raising assets to support the pro-freedom leaders in Baluchistan, Khyber-Pakhtunwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. Also, as mentioned earlier, India must make an entry into Gilgit-Baltistan and northern territories so that it can start leveraging some economic heft in Sinkiang and Wakhan regions and this is where India can press the right Russian buttons in the SCO to let India enter the zone. India's philosophy needs to be clear. It must travel on the Act East Policy; however, its participation in Indo-Pacific and the QUAD has its own connectivity strategic thinking. In any case, exposure of Kashmir to the larger strategic discourse of Central Asia has to become the core driver of Indian foreign policy. In 2016, India inaugurated the Zaranj- Delaram highway that connects Afghanistan and Iran. In 2017, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in India held a multi-stakeholder seminar with Federation of Freight Forwarders to highlight the significance of road transport in reaching Eurasia. The same year India formally acceded to Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR) Convention. Apart from this, since 2002, India, Iran and Russia have been jointly working on the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), a multi-modal connectivity project that intends to fuse Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf with North Europe. India has been very keen on the INSTC, as it will help it in integrating itself deeply in Central Asia without Pakistani logistical support, a regional obstructionist. It also helps India counter the Belt and Road Initiative of China. The trade costs shall be lowered and it will take less time circumventing many regions along the way. In May 2013, the Indian Shipping and Road Transport Minister signed an agreement with Iran to develop Chabar port. The construction of the Chabar port is a step towards the operationalisation of the INSTC. In September 2015, at a meeting in Delhi, a legal framework for transit and customs had also been agreed upon. The Indian Foreign Trade Policy 2015–2020 also made a pitch for INSTC.



The INSTC links the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, and Caspian Sea to the Russian Federation. Studies by various transport experts have proven that the INSTC could provide multiple benefits to all players, especially to Russia and India. Strategically speaking, the INSTC has multiple benefits for India. The first is that the corridor provides India with viable surface transport connectivity to the Eurasian region. A study by the Iranian Ministry of Road Transport suggests that the corridor will reduce transport costs by 30% and shall provide a 40% shorter route as compared to the route passing through China and Europe to reach Russia from India. With the Sagarmala initiative of India and the India–Myanmar–Thailand highway, the corridor will connect Europe and Russia to the ASEAN states. From the Indian point of view, the INSTC and India–Myanmar–Thailand highway could transform India into a potential transit hub. There are lots of factors that constrain the full utilisation of the corridor.



Keeping the connectivity objective in mind, India joined the Ashgabat Agreement in 2018. The agreement was conceptualised in 2011 as a multi-modal connectivity project to bring Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf together via Central Asia. The significance of India joining this agreement is that it aspires to create a 'green' corridor for vehicles, reduce time for transit by speeding works at railway checkpoints, create infrastructure for storing and transit of cargo and upgrade sea jetty facilities for maritime cargo. The entry of India into the agreement will now facilitate the trade between India and Eurasia, under the umbrella of Russia. The agreement also opens enormous connectivity potential for India to reach out to Central Asia. India now will not restrict its engagement under the agreement with Central Asia for trade but can look for concluding Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Central Asians. The accession of India to the TIR convention, as mentioned above, will provide security for transit of goods and help in reduction of insurance costs during transit for traders.



## SECTION 6

# INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICA

- 1. India and Africa: Key Drivers of the Relationship
- 2. India's Africa Policy: Interests, Influence and Diplomatic Strategies in Africa
- 3. Asia–Africa Growth Corridor, Reflections on Indo-Pacific, SAGAR and Maritime Diplomacy
- 4. China as a Factor in India and Africa Relationship and India's Defence Diplomacy
- 5. India's Regional Diplomacy with Africa

### AN OVERVIEW

In 1997, a question was asked on the analysis of India's Africa policy. In 2009, the UPSC asked question on NEPAD and its objectives. In 2011, question was asked on the salient features of political and economic relationship between India and Africa. In 2012, there was a question on why the African countries are rich with resources yet poor. In 2015, a question was asked on increasing interest of India in Africa. In 2018, a question was asked on how ITEC programme has achieved goodwill in Africa. In 2021, the UPSC asked a question on India's interests and influence in Africa.

**Potential foresight** A basic analysis of the previous years' questions suggests that the UPSC has often asked questions on what India is doing in Africa. A common theme that also emerges is that there are questions on Indian interests and influence in Africa. On the basis of this trend, it can be easily inferred that the questions in the future are likely on commercial, security and strategic dimensions. The reason is that these three dimensions are now emerging as new arenas of cooperation with Africa and these are the areas where India's interests also sync well. In this backdrop, this section on Africa has been redesigned by incorporating the new arenas of cooperation as separate chapters to equip the readers with adequate knowledge needed to write effective answers.



# 1

## CHAPTER

# India and Africa: Key Drivers of the Relationship

## INDIA'S HISTORICAL BOND WITH AFRICA

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The trade relations between India and Africa owe their origin to the monsoon winds. Sailors from India sailed in South East monsoonal winds to reach Africa (from June to September) and used the North Eastern monsoonal winds (from December to March) to sail back. During ancient sea trade, Indians used to trade rice, wheat, cloth, incense, palm oil, ivory and gold from Africa and they settled in East and South Africa. In 1497, when Vasco da Gama reached Malindi, he also noted the presence of Indians in Mombasa/Kiliwa. Trade opened up people-to-people contacts, which, in medieval times, saw one of its manifestations during the Mughal rule when Africans were placed in the Mughal army and they were mainly the Siddhis (people who are descendants of Bantu tribes). They were also found in the army of Muhammad Bin Qasim.

## SCRAMBLE OF AFRICA AND INDIA

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After the commencement of the imperial age in Europe, Africa became a colonial battleground. The British, French and Portuguese were the leaders in this race for colonisation and the 17th century period also saw slave trade beginning in Africa who were taken from Africa along with resources to sustain the Industrial Revolution back home in Europe. The French colonised Mauritius and Reunion and there was a need of masons, blacksmiths, carpenters and so on and perceiving these as opportunities, the Indian traders in Africa also brought skilled persons who fit the role from various parts of the west coast of India. A lot of Indians began to settle down to these jobs in Mauritius, Reunion and other East African States. Gradually, the British also emerged on the African scene. In 1833, slavery was abolished in Britain and they evolved a new indentured labour system. The British brought bonded labourers from India to work on sugar plantations, railway establishment in Africa and cotton plantations. Thus the link continued with Africa starting from maritime trade.

## GANDHIAN FACTOR IN INDIA–AFRICA RELATIONSHIP

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During British colonial rule in India, three important factors were Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian National Congress (INC). The Congress, since its inception, showed support to and solidarity with the African cause. In 1890, the British sent Indian soldiers to Sudan to fight—a move that the INC opposed vehemently as Indian soldiers in Sudan and Ethiopia did not fight for any cause that ultimately had any benefit for India. Rather, they were used by the British to suppress the natives. In 1893, Gandhi went on an assignment to Africa. During his study in Africa, he witnessed severe racial discrimination. During his stay in Africa till 1913–14, he evolved and practised the concept of Satyagraha, which eventually emerged as a technique of mass mobilisation. The success of Satyagraha in Africa affirmed its utility as a tool of non-violence and it went on to be later used as one of the core tools of Indian national movement. During the early 20th century, when the Indian national movement gained momentum, India did not lose touch with Africa. India always felt that Africa, like India, had also been a victim of imperialism and that India needed to assist Africa in its fight against imperial powers. In 1927, the INC, at its Calcutta session, took a decision to open offices overseas. Offices by INC were opened in Africa to assist Africans. In 1927, Nehru had already participated in the Brussels Conference of oppressed Nationalities

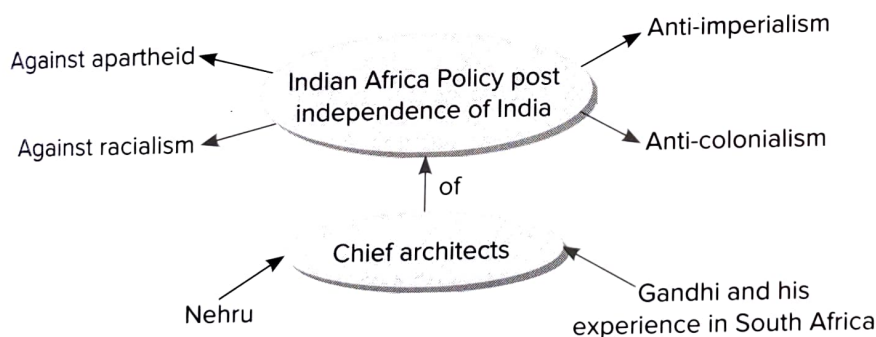


and had advanced an idea of India being a kingpin in the process of liberating the world from imperial powers. The conference moulded our foreign policy thought from 1928 onwards as far as Africa was concerned—we began to link our freedom struggle with the imperial struggle of Africa. India evolved a thought that its own freedom struggle and Africa's struggle against imperial powers as well as its fight against apartheid were in natural continuation with the idea of one world, free of imperialism and oppression. This Afro-Asian solidarity also moulded our foreign policy that emerged after independence as the core pillar of policy of non-alignment.

## INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICA DURING THE COLD WAR

After India became independent, from 1950s to 1970s, it supported decolonisation in Africa. India believed that it became independent because of Gandhi's Satyagraha. Satyagraha was a technique that Gandhi had conceptualised and implemented successfully in Africa. So, India believed that it was their moral responsibility to teach Africans the idea of Satyagraha and support decolonisation over there. During this period, Nehru played an instrumental role in implementing this policy. The non-alignment became a crucial factor that acted as a bridge. India used non-alignment not only to reach out to Africans to support their decolonisation but also used it as a tool to promote non-alignment in Africa.

The instance of South Africa provided the necessary ammunition to India to build a constructive Indian foreign policy towards Africa based on its opposition to all other racial regimes in that continent. Thus, Indian policy in Africa introduced anti-racialism as a new tool along with anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism. India taking up the fight against apartheid in the UN in 1964 also resonated well amongst Africans, all the while India's intense and sole focus being on non-violent modes of protest.



India advanced support to Africa against colonialism but it did not insist on fixing a date to end colonialism in Africa. This upset many African leaders as they deemed that India might not be serious about supporting the African struggle against colonialism. Things began to change for India after the 1962 conflict with China. Firstly, after the conflict, India became busier to counter an aggressive China at every forum. In contrast to the precepts of non-violence championed by India, China, on the other hand, preached armed struggle amongst Africans. This appealed more to some African leaders who were not happy with the results that the slow approach advocated by India brought about. For instance, Algeria, a French Colony in Africa, resorted to an armed struggle against France. Because of these reasons, support for India gradually began to decline amongst the African nations. The decline was visible prominently after the death of Nehru. Support for China began to grow and China began to make inroads into the African territory. The two case studies ahead aptly summarise the decline of support for India.

## India and South Africa Relationship

South Africa was an important trading partner of India during the times of the British Raj. In 1946, South Africa came out with a Ghetto Act that aimed to aggregate resistant colonies in South Africa as per racial differences. This move irked India, and in 1946, Nehru, the interim PM took up the issue of the Ghetto Act in the UN by invoking Articles 10 and 14 of the UN Charter. Despite flourishing trade, India decided to cut ties with South Africa after its insistence on maintaining status quo. India not only broke off its diplomatic ties with South Africa but also did not revive the same till 1994, when apartheid in South Africa officially ended.

## Divergences in India and Africa Ties

After the death of Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri led the NAM summit held in Cairo, Egypt. During the Summit, India wanted a resolution urging China on renouncing the use of force. There was hardly any support from African nations for this cause. Similarly, towards the end of the Summit, India wanted a resolution compelling China not to take the nuclear route. India thought that due to its disarmament credentials, there would be support for it from the African states, but initially only Cyprus supported it. This clearly signalled a situation of declining support for India amongst the African nations.

### India and East Africa Relations

East Africa was one such area where there was a sizeable presence of the Indian diaspora. Nehru wanted to support East Africa against colonialism and sent his trusted aide, Apa Saheb Bala Saheb Pant, a respected Gandhian, writer, freedom fighter and diplomat, as India's ambassador to East Africa. His home had become a nerve centre for all efforts coordinated against colonialism. The British were alarmed upon seeing this. They pressurised Nehru to recall Apa Saheb Pant. Nehru was forced to recall Pant, leaving the East Africans disillusioned.

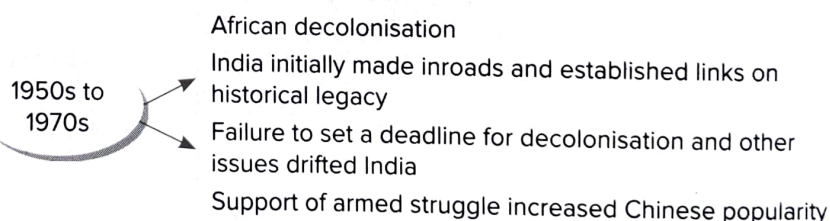
### Reconnecting to the Indian Diaspora in Kenya

With a renewed focus on the diaspora from the 1970s, India and Kenya, in 1990, established the Africa-India Development Association. Apart from boosting bilateral economic engagement, the association aimed at integrating the Indian diaspora in the economic life of Kenya. This reflects the new importance attached to the diaspora acting as a bridge in the relations between the two nations.

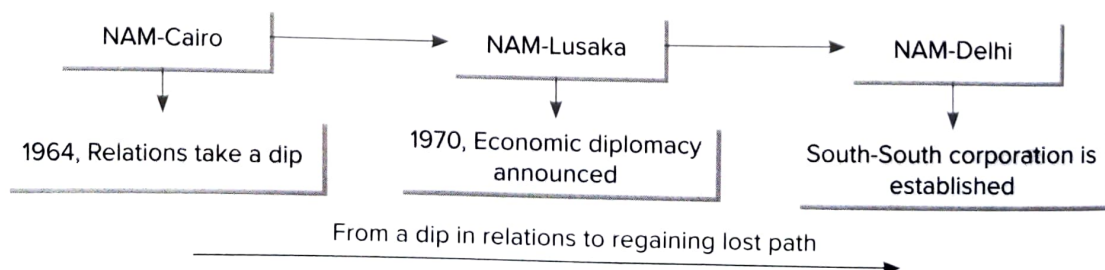
The next phase (1970s to 1990s) began with India opening its relations with Africa due to its historical connection, bolstered by a common colonial legacy. As the African decolonisation was completed, the African nations were looking for a role model for development. India made strategies to regain the lost path, using Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as a tool to rework its relationship with Africa. To seize the new opportunity in Africa, from 1970s, NAM became economy-oriented and India was in a place where it could flex its muscle because domestically things were in better order. The Green Revolution had succeeded in improving the food security situation. A military conflict with Pakistan succeeded in India's favour in 1971. India, then, decided to become economically assertive in Africa. The most important policy, however, was with respect to the Indian diaspora. During the Nehruvian era, Nehru insisted that the diaspora of India in Africa should place interests of the host nations they reside in over and above their own interests. More so, due to strategic concerns of the NAM, India gave less preference to the needs of the diaspora at that time.

During this phase of reconnect (1970s till the end of the Cold War), the importance of the Indian diaspora increased. The success of India's Peaceful Nuclear Explosion in 1974 also contributed to the rise of India's international image from 1970s. India began to use NAM Summits to economically integrate diplomacy with Africa and focused on strengthening the South-South Cooperation a term used by the policymakers to denote development and economic cooperation between developing countries of the global south.

In 1970, at the NAM conference in Lusaka, India outlined its new approach for Africa. India encouraged Africa to undertake vigorous domestic growth and pledged technological and economic support in this endeavour to strengthen the idea of SSC. India encouraged its Heads of Missions in Africa to focus on economic assistance to Africa and told the diplomats to promote economic engagement. A special role for the diaspora was envisaged in this by the new relationship as Indira Gandhi called upon the Indian diaspora to act as ambassadors of India.



This renewed thrust gave India an opportunity to re-establish its link with Africa. Its economic diplomacy, however, was certainly not as aggressive as that of Western powers. Whatever assistance India gave was limited but had a positive impact in the African thought process as all assistance was provided without any conditionality, and driven with an intention of helping Africans grow.

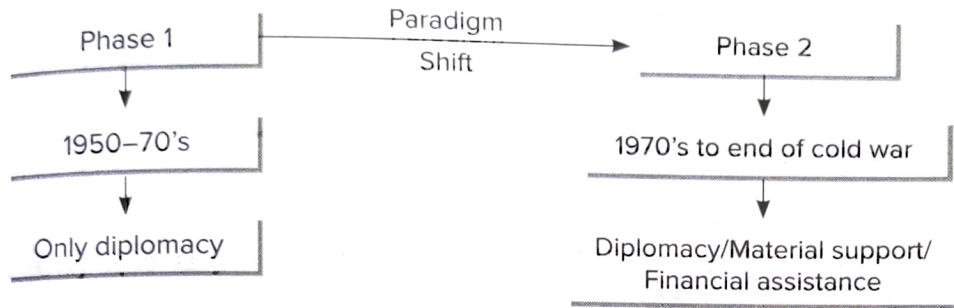




In 1986, India, at the NAM summit in Harare, established the AFRICA fund which acted as material assistance by India in the fight against Apartheid in South Africa and Namibia. The economic engagement continued with Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana re-established its ties more aggressively with Africa and continued to deepen the engagement in the post-Cold War period.

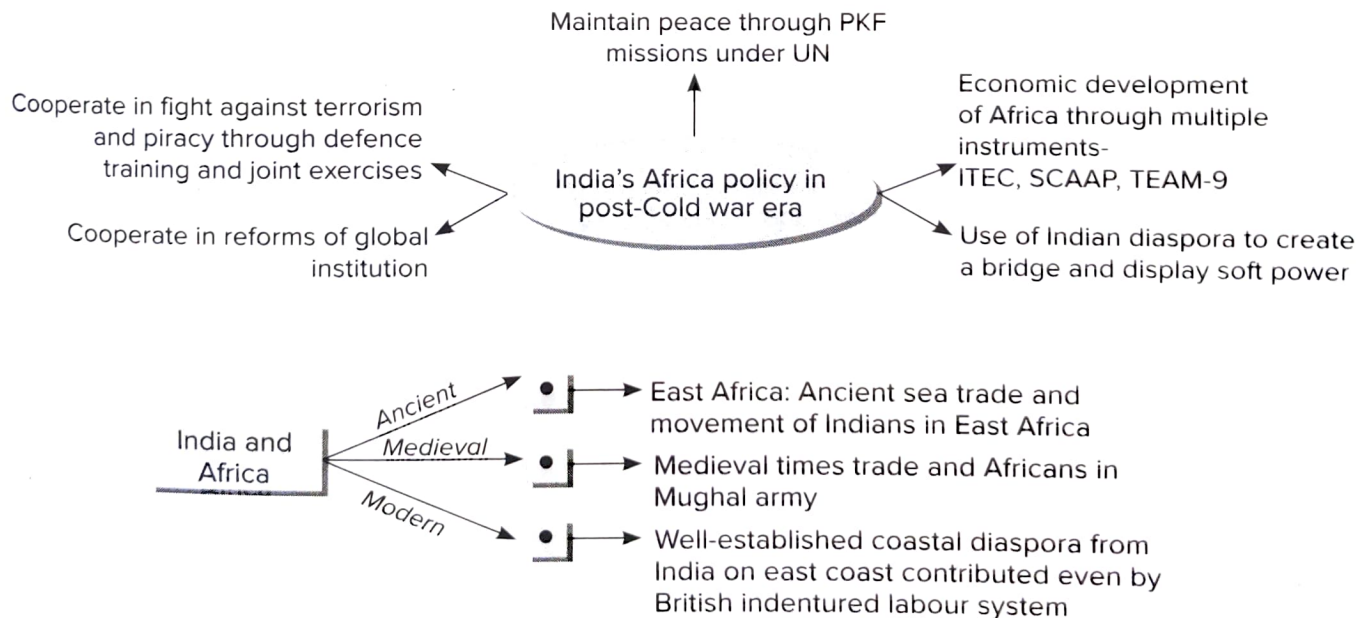
### India and South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) Diplomacy

The Namibian territory was under the control of South Africa. The South Africans continued with their illegal rule. When this illegal rule of South Africa, in Namibia, reached the International Court of Justice in 1972, the court deferred the decision of ending or termination of South Africa rule. In 1982, after enormous deliberation, India proposed a global level meeting and accorded full diplomatic status to SWAPO, while also providing it monetary and material assistance. In 1990, Namibia gained independence, which opened up diplomatic relations again.



## INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICA IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

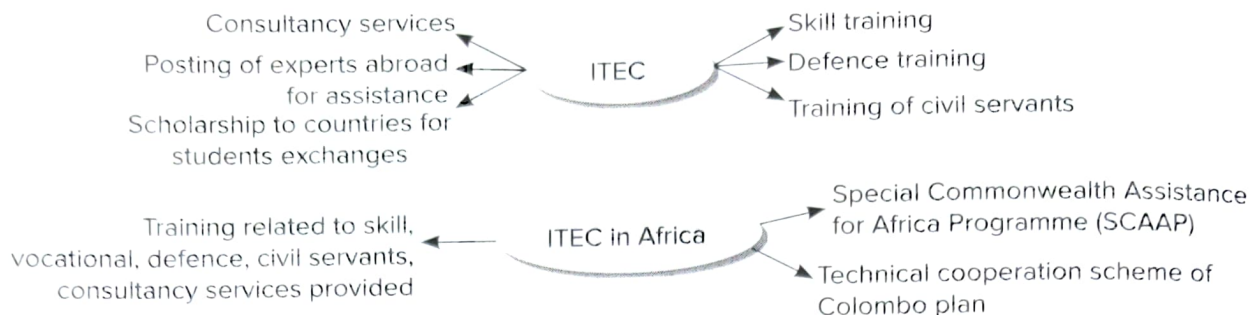
India's engagement in the post-Cold War period owes its base to its Cold War engagement where energy concerns dominated. Economic diplomacy pushed the relationship. India realised the importance of Africa to ensure energy security in the future. In 2017, India organised the fourth India–Africa Hydrocarbons Conference. The conference again provided India an opportunity to showcase its expertise in oil exploration, oil refining and drilling technology. The new strategy of India's engagement with Africa is rightly called as ABBA–Africa for Bharat and Bharat for Africa.



## CHAPTER

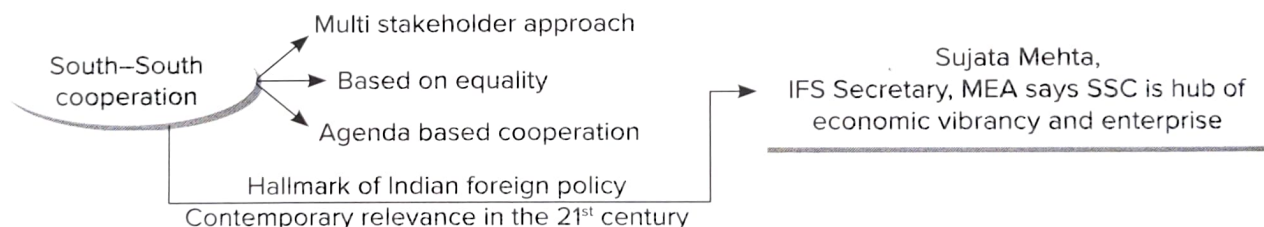
The acronym ITEC stands for Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation. The Nehruvian foreign policy envisaged the idea of 'one world', which led to an interdependent world where countries cooperate in socio-economic and developmental well-being. After independence, India received tremendous assistance from international agencies and forums (for example, India played an important role in The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its developmental endeavour. India thereby reached an understanding that it would be important for India to share the development lessons and its experiences with other nations. Nehru had this dream of ensuring that other developing countries learn from India's own learning. This envisaged India to position itself as a trainer for the developmental need of other Third World Countries. Keeping this in mind, on 15th September 1964, India launched this bilateral initiative for Africa known as ITEC. For Africa, ITEC had three parts. First, India envisaged giving training to other countries for their overall development. Second, ITEC is now ITEC as a programme continues to be one of the most important diplomatic tools for India abroad. Third, the Development Partnership Administration multilateral in nature and is linked to initiatives under the ASEAN. Third, the Development Partnership Administration Division, a division in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), manages the ITEC.





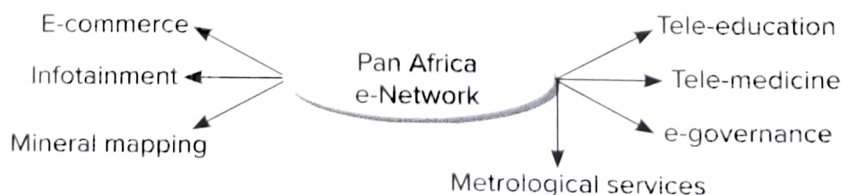
## INDIA'S INFLUENCE IN AFRICA THROUGH SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (SSC) DIPLOMACY

The origin of SSC goes back to Bandung Conference in 1955. In the conference, the African nations decided to initiate a partnership with each other at the development level. Since 1961, this partnership became a part of the NAM. Initially it had two components, namely, technical cooperation amongst developing countries and economic cooperation amongst developing countries. The idea was that the participating countries should undertake developmental cooperation, which would involve multiple stakeholders including national governments, civil societies, public-private partnerships and individuals. It envisaged the sharing of knowledge, developmental experiences, technical assistance and so forth. India always believed that North-South cooperation is important and it would act as a supplement to SSC. India approached SSC without any conditionality, and with full respect for the sovereignty of the other participating countries. In contrast, economic diplomacy is an economic engagement by countries for self-benefit through trade. In fact, SSC is also different from North-South cooperation as SSC is a demand-driven, voluntary, horizontal programme with no conditions attached. In the 21st century, India, under SSC, promotes sustainable development, inclusive growth, infrastructure and energy as goals. India assists Africa in SSC in all the parameters above.



## INDIA'S INFLUENCE IN AFRICA THROUGH PAN-AFRICA E-NETWORK PROJECT DIPLOMACY

Since 1990s, India has made tremendous progress in providing education and health in remote areas through developments in the Information-Communication-Technology (ICT). In 2004, A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, while addressing the Pan-African Parliament, envisioned satellite-based connectivity with all African nations to assist them in health and education. The Indian government used the idea to initiate Pan-Africa e-Network Project. The government established a huge network to provide services in consultations with Telecom Consultants India Limited. The project was officially inaugurated in 2010.



## INDIA'S INFLUENCE IN AFRICA THROUGH TEAM-9 INITIATIVE

In 2004, the India government launched the Techno-Economic Approach for Africa–India movement. This is a regional initiative exclusively meant for eight West African States. India feels the need to establish a connection with West Africa as it is a resource-rich region. India, through TEAM-9, intends to help development in this resource-rich but underdeveloped region with assistance for infrastructure and low-cost technology. The aim here is to provide assistance to specific projects and give a thrust to the private sector of India so as to promote trade. India has earmarked 500 million dollars line of credit here. The West African region does not have large India diaspora but the Gulf of Guinea is certainly a new hotspot of oil in Africa.

## INDIA'S INFLUENCE IN AFRICA THROUGH INDIA–AFRICA FORUM SUMMIT (IAFS) DIPLOMACY

### Western Sahara, Morocco and IAFS-3 in 2015

The region of Western Sahara was under the colonial control of Spain till 1975. Spain liberated Western Sahara in 1975. Immediately after this, Morocco and Mauritania began to claim West Sahara as it is a region rich in phosphate and has the largest phosphate reserves in the world. Over a period of time, Mauritania gradually went out of the picture but Morocco did not. In 1976, Sahrawi formed Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and established it as a sovereign state under the Polisario Front. In 1985, India gave recognition to Saharavi Republic as it thought Polisario Front was fighting a struggle for self-determination. However, as the UN took over efforts to resolve the issue, India, in 2000, withdrew its recognition. This recognition of SADR by India had created a deep resentment in Morocco–India relations as Morocco considered SADR a part of its territory. In IAFS-3, India had invited 54 African nations including Morocco with no representation officially from SADR/Western Sahara.

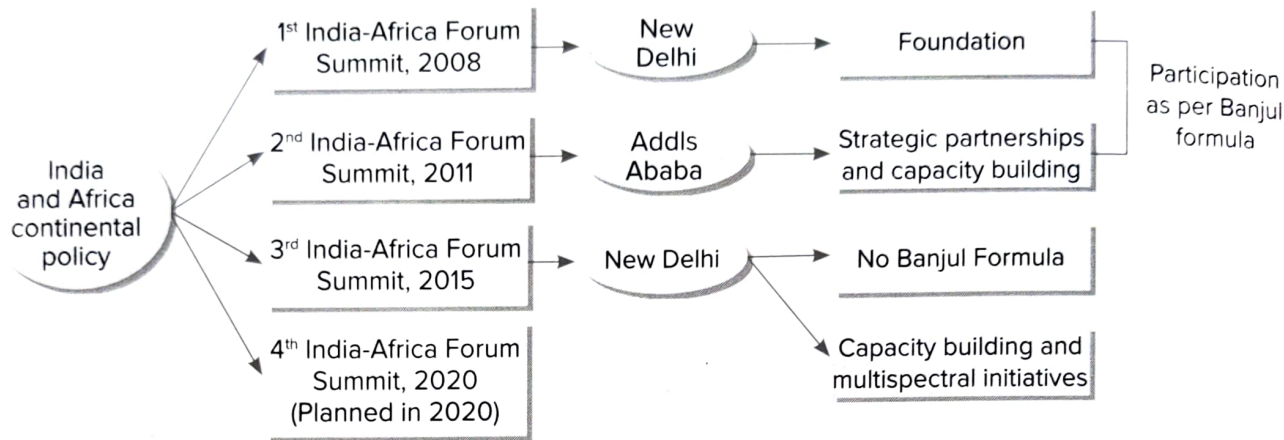
Continental level engagements with Africa are not new for India. The origin of such interactions goes back to 1993, when Japan initiated the first ever Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). This was followed by China initiating the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). On similar lines, to open up continental level engagement, India launched its first ever IAFS in 2008 in New Delhi. The forum concluded with the New Delhi Declaration that reaffirmed the shared vision of vibrancy and resurgence in India–Africa relations. The declaration set an agenda for India and Africa to collaborate on sustainable development, climate change and UN reforms. Subsequently, a second such summit was organised in 2011. The second IAFS was held in the Ethiopian Capital, Addis Ababa in 2011. The Addis Ababa Declaration adopted a new cooperative framework based on capacity building, peace and security. India envisaged the creation of institutions such as the Indian Institute of Technology and the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade in Africa. In the second IAFS, India also committed to creating a two-million-dollar fund for the African Union Mission in Somalia to curb piracy. The third IAFS was held from 25th to 28th October in 2015. The third IAFS is unique in multiple aspects. The first aspect is the issue of participation in the IAFS. This is because, in 2006, the African Union (AU) in the city of Banjul (capital of Gambia) announced the Banjul Formula. In the first IAFS, there was participation by 14 states, while in the second IAFS, there were 11 states that participated. In IAFS-3, India decided to do away with limited participation (as per the Banjul formula) and invited all 54 Head of the States from Africa. This was done because India had decided to launch the 'Outreach to Africa Programme' in the third session of the IAFS. Second, the IAFS-3 opened up on the cultural note. For the first time in the history succeeding the Cold War, India organised a successful event, hosting 54 nations at one place. The IAFS-3 concluded with the Delhi Declaration 2015, which articulated the India–Africa relationship as 'Partners in Progress' and pledged to work 'towards a dynamic and transformative development agreement'. India officially pledged support to the African Agenda 2063 and committed resources to Africa to help achieve goals of the agenda. India also announced

### What is Banjul Formula?

According to the Banjul formula, (adopted in 2006), India would extend an invitation to 15 African Head of the States to participate in the India–Africa Forum Summit which would include five participating states of NEPAD (New Economic Partnership for African Development—A programme of African Union to seek global support for the development of Africa) programme, 8 member states to be identified from Regional Economic Communities of African Union and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. These 15 nations would participate in IAFS.

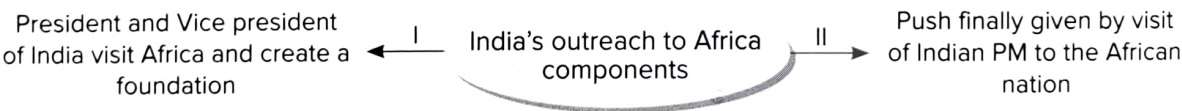


10 billion dollar line of credit for projects, along with thirty thousand scholarships. What also makes the Delhi Declaration 2015 unique is that the areas in which Africa and India are going to collaborate were broadened to now incorporate solar technology, food security, blue economy, rural housing, skill development, use of social networks to enhance people-to-people cooperation and sustainable development. Delhi Declaration has also adopted a monitoring mechanism to implement the agendas envisaged. They have also adopted the India–Africa Framework for Strategic Cooperation.



**INDIA’S INFLUENCE IN AFRICA THROUGH INDIA’S AFRICA POLICY OF MODI GOVERNMENT**

Since the coming of the new government in India in 2014, it has given tremendous importance to reaching out to Africa. India’s outreach to Africa began in early 2015 when senior ministers were sent to visit all 54 nations in Africa to invite them to India for the third IAFS in October 2015. This spectacular diplomatic achievement later also saw India doing away with the Banjul formula. After the success of the summit, the second component of outreach began. As discussed above, the second component witnessed the Indian President and Vice President visiting African nations to strengthen bilateral ties. In the third component, we see the Indian Prime Minister reaching out starting July 2016. Thus, through this unique format, India was able to reassert people-to-people as well as government-to-government ties, along with building business link.



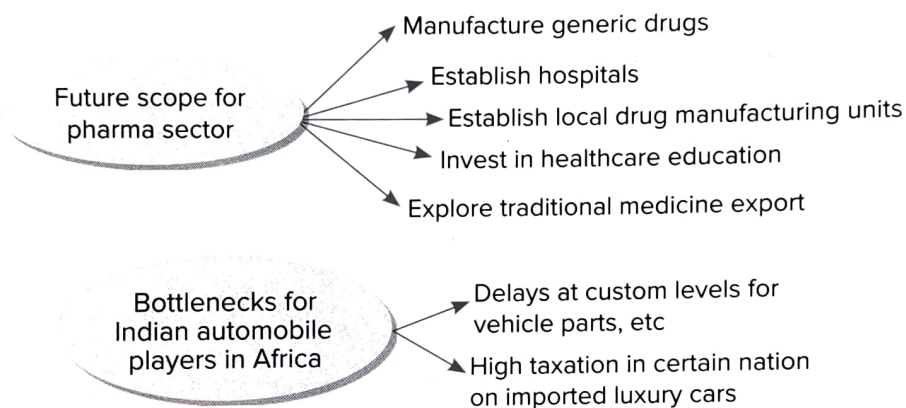
**MODI’S TEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR INDIA’S ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA**

India has announced ten guiding principles that will enable us to engage with Africa. These principles are our vision for Africa.

Intensive and deep engagement	Development and skill enhancement of Africans
Support to African industry and intensive trade	Combat terrorism, extremism and ensure cybersecurity
Support digital revolution in Africa	Cooperative and inclusive Indian Ocean security
Improve agricultural output of Africa	Joint efforts to ensure Africa nurtures its youth
Jointly ensure just international climate order	Jointly create a just, representative and democratic global order

## INDIA'S INFLUENCE IN AFRICA THROUGH HEALTH DIPLOMACY, PHARMACEUTICAL COOPERATION AND VACCINE MAITRI

The Indian pharmacy sector has recorded vibrant growth. It has not only shown noticeable progress in generic drugs but also quality medicines for TB, Malaria and so forth. In the time of COVID-19, India has sent consignments of Paracetamol and Hydroxychloroquine to 25 African states, with initial beneficiaries being Mauritius, Comoros, Seychelles and Madagascar as immediate beneficiaries even under 'Project Sagar'. India has also launched e-ITEC COVID-19 Management Strategies Training Webinars to provide training to health professionals in Africa to tackle COVID-19. While both India and China may be trying to provide health-based support to Africa in the times of COVID-19, their strategies are markedly different. For Chinese, the key influencing drivers of their health diplomacy are money, political power and elite level wealth creation. The Chinese are keener on developing state-to-state relations than people-to-people relations, because their larger interests are hard infrastructure for resource extraction. Thus, the Chinese are more concerned about pleasing the African elite. This is where India differs, because our focus is on building local capacities with African states on an equal partnership. The COVID-19 has proven that as India and China rise in Africa, two distinct models are available for the Africans to select their long-term partners ahead.



## INDIA'S INFLUENCE IN AFRICA THROUGH EDUCATION DIPLOMACY

Africa has been receiving tremendous support from UN for its Millennium Development Goals and Education for All initiative. The focus of both is on universalisation of primary education and reduction of poverty and gender disparities. Due to special attention, Africa has made progress in school education but is struggling to arrange gainful employment for its school pass outs since Africa lacks institutions for skill development and higher education. It is in this context that India steps in. India has been focussing on skill development and scholarships in Africa. The prime interest of India is to skill the youth of Africa and enables them to play an aggressive role in the future development of the continent. In the second IAFS, in 2011, India entered the fray on continuous skill development through capacity building initiatives by building IIT and IIIT. India had, by 2015, provided more than 20,000 scholarships for higher education. The third IAFS, in 2015, has envisaged 30,000 scholarships for the future. Considering India has made noticeable advancement and tapped the skill and higher education market, it would be imminent for India at this stage to enhance this effort to become a global leader. The MEA needs to make this area its special focus and announce a properly planned HRD policy for African markets. India has not only invited African students to India for higher education but also offers courses with a special focus on skilling the African youth through vocational training. To ensure that India is able to attract the global student community, India needs to focus upon four things:

- Enhance the university curriculum capabilities to support cultural diversity in university campuses.
- At the diplomatic level, enhance academic partnerships.
- Ensure that the African students who come to India get hands on training in Small and Medium Enterprises in India as part of academic partnerships.
- Design special curriculums on climate change for African students.



## INDIA'S INFLUENCE IN AFRICA THROUGH PAN-AFRICA E-KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

In 2019, India launched the Pan-Africa E-knowledge network. The programme aims to provide 4000 African students free tele-education annually. In addition to this, India will provide 1000 candidates of Africa medical education, which will include courses in nursing and paramedics. The new project is likely to act as a digital bridge of knowledge and health. The most crucial part of the project is that it is applicable to French speaking region of Western Africa also where India has a minimal presence. This programme is based on the vision of Indian Ocean security rooted in inclusivity, cooperation and growth for all. The programme will transform African youth into a nursery of aspirations in the future. Due to COVID-19, as the movement of African students to India has been affected, Indian government has decided to extend e-Vidya Bharti (tele-education project) to Africa. India is aiming to establish an India–Africa Virtual University by 2021.

## HURDLES IN INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA

### Fourth India–Africa Forum Summit 2022

The fourth summit was actually planned in 2020 but got delayed due to the pandemic. The fourth summit occurred in 2022 in Mauritania and the focus was on skill- and capacity-building initiatives, health care, agriculture, maritime security, climate change and nurturing Africa's digital revolution.

India has harnessed its historical relations with Africa and envisages a bright future ahead. India also acknowledges that Africa is a vibrant continent and the next 'growth pole' in the world (as articulated by former Indian PM Dr. Manmohan Singh). The Indian engagement is beyond resources and spreads well into IT, pharmacy, agriculture, skill, training and capacity building, and so on. India's aim is to assist Africa in its overall development, with a larger aim of security and peace with convergence on global issues. In the twenty-first century, India has also expanded its footprint aptly in the Indian Ocean owing to new security challenges emerging. Apart from these, there are a few other areas where India and Africa need to cooperate more which require changes in diplomacy from the Indian side. Some salient points are given below:

- India needs to firstly articulate a policy on Africa and engage with the continent through a doctrine.
- India needs to appoint an ambassador of India for Africa in the MEA who would act as a nerve centre for all policies in Africa.
- India should widen the discussion dynamics at the IAFS level and bring the private sector and the civil society in the IAFS platform rather than restricting it only to government-to-government interactions.

Despite various kinds of developmental assistance provided by India, some of the key obstacles in enhancing trade with Africa are as follows:

- Political instability in Africa and absence of stable regimes and rule of law.
- Corruption in African governments acting as a deterrent for private firms.
- Lack of regulatory framework and regime architecture.
- Lack of access to institutional finance to promote trade.
- Logistical concerns and poor connectivity in the hinterland.

## AREAS OF FUTURE COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND AFRICA

It would be the best for India if in cooperation with Africa it announces a skill development policy and helps African skill development through quantitative target setting. The MEA can designate the Indian diaspora as unofficial ambassador in its endeavour of soft power export and publicise the good work done in India to mould a framework public opinion. India has to accelerate engagement with Africa by injecting bilateralism in the diplomatic processes. This will give India an opportunity to have one-on-one interaction with African nations. For example, Morocco in the recent times as initiated a moderate Islamic programme that is exclusively designed for tackling radicalisation. India can enhance its cooperation with Morocco at this level. India has to spend more diplomatic capital to popularise the projects it is funding and executing in Africa. For example, in the recent times, after the outbreak of COVID-19, India has emerged as one of the top donors

to Africa but our efforts have not received adequate publicity. India needs to evolve a suitable soft policy strategy with Africa that can yield bilateral mutual benefits. For example, India can envisage a tie up between film industries of both the countries. India can improve direct flight connectivity between India with Africa, which remains very poor till date. Africa presents numerous opportunities for cooperation in healthcare due to the presence of widespread diseases such as HIV, TB, Malaria, and so on. India can share all the effective measures it has followed to tackle COVID-19, with Africa as it lacks effective healthcare delivery and has scarce public resources. India can share all the effective measures it has followed to tackle COVID-19, with Africa as it lacks effective healthcare delivery and has scarce public resources. The COVID-19 crisis can be used to explore new partnerships in QUAD Plus format where QUAD states can propose cooperation with selected African states by creating mechanisms for exchange of views.

### Boosting India's Exports by Linking LDCs into India's Potential Global Value Chains

This recent paper has shown that India intends to sharpen its presence in the global value chains by leveraging SSC and Africa is looking for partners to support their growth. The paper asserts that India is in need of dyes and leather, which it can source from African countries and enable them to become a part of the global value supply chains.

## INDIA'S COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN AFRICA

Africa is a land of resources. As per estimates, Africa is endowed with 10% of the world's oil and 40% of the world's gold. Different regions of Africa have different resources and the continent, in totality, is beneficial for India in multiple aspects. As the economy of Africa grows, there will be new demand for projects and goods. Indian private sector, in this regard, intends to play a key role in meeting African needs. Before we study the trade dynamics, it is important to briefly have a look at different regions in Africa.

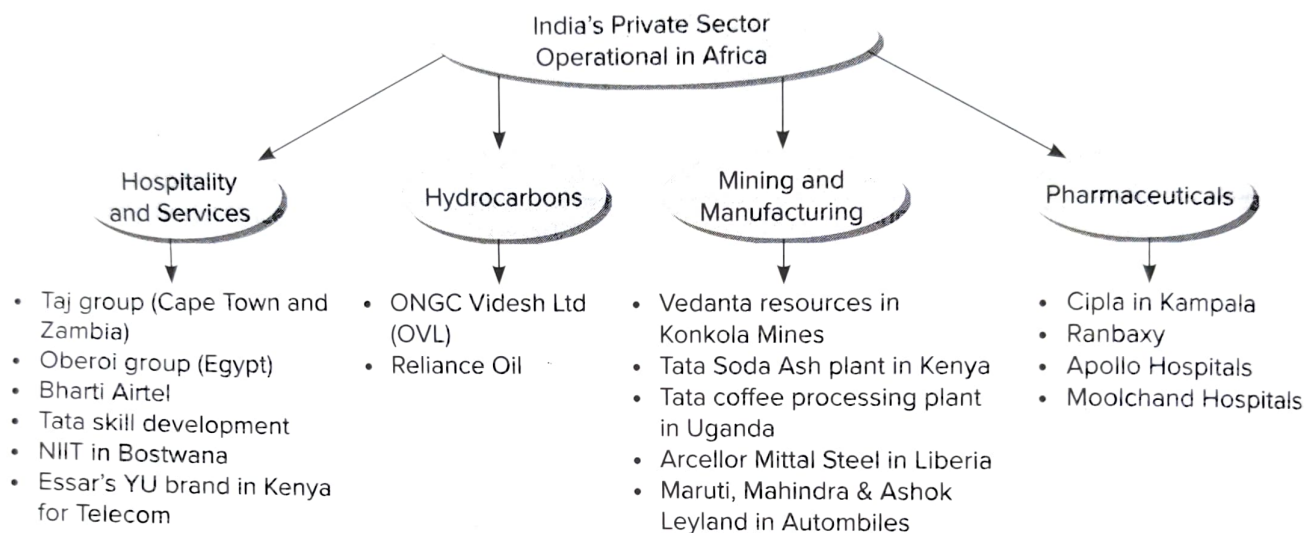
Name of the region	Important commercial centres for India	Core competencies of the commercial centre and region	Miscellaneous information
Western Africa	Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory coast	Crude oil	Piracy problem
Southern Africa	Angola and South Africa	Crude oil (Angola only) Non-oil such as gold, diamonds, steel	Market access is absent
Northern Africa	Egypt, Tunisia	Oil, chemicals, phosphates and fertilisers	Arab spring and political instability
Eastern Africa	Kenya, Mozambique, Mauritius, Seychelles	Leather products, bags and islands are strategic importance	Need to augment skill and technics
Central Africa	Chad, Congo, Uganda, Malawi, Rwanda	Vegetables and coffee	Transport and reach is an issue

## INDIA'S FOCUS AFRICA PROGRAMME (FAP) AND TRADE DIPLOMACY

To promote trade, India has used instruments such as lines of credit, FAP and duty-free trade preference systems. The CII and FICCI from India also play an important role in this regard. They regularly organise platforms in consultation with African forums, giving India an opportunity to leverage its private sector. The private sector appropriately uses these forums to create business in Africa. A brief mention here of the duty-free quota-free (DFQF) market access; the FAP and Indian firms in Africa will aid our understanding. The Doha round of negotiations in 2001 for the first time envisaged DFQF market access to least developed countries (LDC). It was only in 2005, in the Ministerial Conference (of WTO) in Hong Kong, the decision was taken that the developed countries would be allowed to undertake DFQF market access to LDCs. On the sidelines of the first IAFS in 2008, India went on to formally initiate duty-free trade preference scheme (DFTPS).



designed to boost bilateral trade. The scheme has got further impetus in its effort to boost trade after its modification in 2014. The measures by India have further strengthened SSC. In 2002–2003, India also launched its FAP. This programme is underway in twenty-four African nations. Within this programme, heads of the Indian Missions in these 24 nations act as commercial sales agents. The diplomatic machinery does extensive research and outlines opportunities available for Indian exporters. The Indian exporters then undertake market access and market development. This helps India to boost its exports in Africa and opens up opportunities for the private sector of India. A lot of Indian companies are doing tremendous business in Africa. The role of private sector is analysed better when we study bilateral relations but broadly the picture is as given below:



## AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (AfCFTA) AND COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIA

In March 2018, the heads of 55 African states gathered at Kigali, Rwanda, and signed the AfCFTA (it needs ratification of 22 signatory states to come into effect). Brokered by the African Union, the AfCFTA is a continental free trade agreement. As per a study of the UN Economic Commission, by 2022, the AfCFTA will boost the intra-Africa trade by 52% (from 2010 levels). The three core aims of AfCFTA include the following:

- Abolishing the import duties on 90% goods that currently average at 6%.
- Raising the internal African trade by 50%.
- Scrapping non-tariff barriers.

In 2020, the bilateral Indo-Africa trade stood at US\$ 60 billion (an increase from US\$ 11 billion in 2005). AfCFTA will be beneficial for India, as it will give an edge to the Indian exporters. The Indian exporters would now be able to access a unified and a robust market in Africa. Various economic think tanks have carried out studies to assert that if AfCFTA is established, Indian trade with Africa will increase by 10%. This rise in Indian trade will have geoeconomic and geostrategic consequences as well. This increased trade can help India balance out rising China–Africa trade. As China follows a more resource-centric extractive strategy, AfCFTA can be a boost to Indian development-centric strategy. As India looks at Africa for energy security, AfCFTA can help India potentially leverage the concept of blue economy. This will enable India to diversify its resource base and the trade basket. AfCFTA can be synchronised by India with the Africa Asia growth corridor and can help India leverage the overall trade dynamics. There has been 12% increase in India–Africa trade in 2019. India has become the fifth largest investor in Africa with cumulative investments of US\$ 54 billion, creating thousands of jobs for local citizens. Over two-thirds of India's LOCs in the past decade directed to African countries. Currently 189 projects in 42 African countries at US\$ 11.4 billion under implemented with Indian LOCs, the Foreign Secretary informed. For

over half a century ITEC has offered training and skill development to countries from Africa. At the India–Africa Forum Summit in 2015, India announced a doubling of the number of scholarships to 50,000 befitting people across Africa.

Prime Minister	View of Africa	Policy Paradigm for Africa
Jawaharlal Nehru	Historical engagement	Non-alignment to connect
Indira Gandhi	Economic roots to historical policy	NAM became a tool of economic engagement
Rajiv Gandhi	Economic roots to historical policy	NAM became a tool of economic engagement
Narsimha Rao	Economic roots to historical policy	NAM became a tool of economic engagement
I. K. Gujral	Economic roots to historical policy	NAM became a tool of economic engagement
Atal Behari Vajpayee	No special significance given	Diplomatic engagement
Manmohan Singh	Development diplomacy	Focused on development of Africa
Narendra Modi	Development-cum-security diplomacy	Africa to be developed by India and its geopolitical location will be an advantage to the security of India in Indian Ocean.





# 3

CHAPTER

## Asia–Africa Growth Corridor, Reflections on Indo-Pacific, SAGAR and Maritime Diplomacy

### ASIA–AFRICA GROWTH CORRIDOR

At the 52nd Annual General Meeting of African Development Bank in Gandhinagar in May 2017, the Indian PM, along

#### Reflections on Indo-Pacific: Perspectives from Africa

The Indo-Pacific is a vast maritime zone with geopolitical, geoeconomic and geostrategic significance but the concept unfortunately excludes Africa, which has a vast maritime frontier. In this backdrop, neglecting Africa in this vast maritime realm will deprive them of developmental benefits. Thus, India must take the leadership role and push for bringing Africa on board, thereby making Indo-Pacific truly inclusive.

with his Japanese and African counterparts, propounded the idea of an Asia–Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC). Under this initiative, a mega sea corridor based on ancient sea routes connecting Africa with India and South East and East Asia is being envisaged. The idea is to create a low-cost, environment-friendly sea corridor to boost investment, transport, trade and connectivity. India and Japan are going to play a major role in developing the infrastructure. The creation of AAGC will be akin to making an investment corridor where Japan will contribute its expertise in infrastructure creation while India will bring its core diplomatic expertise. The priority areas of AAGC include projects related to health, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, food processing, disaster management, skill development and technology. Some scholars have theorised that the AAGC is a counter proposal to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative or the BRI. The AAGC is unique in many aspects. Firstly, in contrast to the BRI, the AAGC is a purely sea-based corridor, which means that it ensures a lesser carbon footprint. Secondly, in AAGC, the process is more democratic and consultative as the focus is to assist the African states in the ways they want. Thirdly, the AAGC is a corridor where the private sector will be playing a major role in contrast to the BRI, which will be completely State funded. The corridor will have four components: Development and cooperation projects, Quality infrastructure and institutional connectivity, Capabilities and skill enhancement and people-to-people partnerships.

### INDIA'S PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS IN AFRICA AND DIMENSIONS OF SECURITY DIPLOMACY

Since independence, India has been consistent in sending peace keeping forces (PKF) to assist the UN in the process of decolonisation. The decisions of participation in UN activities through the PKF not only helps India achieve its foreign policy goal of maintaining peace but also increases India's prestige. In a very strategic sense, India does not achieve any goal related to national interest in the purest sense, as the PKF undertakes no combat roles on the ground. The PKF is primarily responsible for peace keeping. The participation gives Indian agencies exposure to the different kinds of conflict, which provides important lessons for logistics and military diplomacy. The participation of the PKF is overall in sync with Article 51 of our Constitution, which aims to promote peace and security at the international level. There is a Permanent Mission of India (PMI) in New York at the UN office. An officer of the rank of colonel in the Indian army receives requests by the UN for the PKF. The PMI forwards the application to the MEA. The file is then forwarded after clearance at MEA to

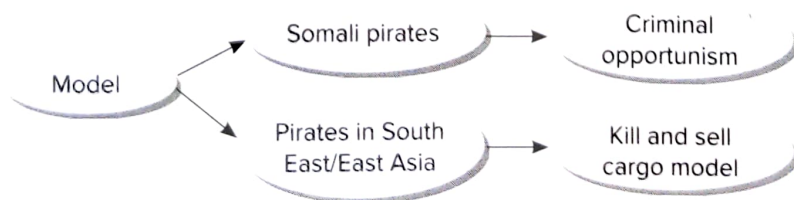
the Ministry of Defence. A tri-services board under the Director General of Staff reviews the request, takes the necessary decision and hands the file back to the MEA. The file is then presented by the MEA to the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) and after approval, the MEA announces the decision in the Parliament to send forces. Thus, the decision to send the PKF is at the sole discretion of the Union Executive. Till date, India has sent PKFs in Namibia, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Congo and Sudan. In Africa, the PKF focuses primarily on peace and humanitarian assistance. For example, in Congo, our officials have provided medical treatment in the UN hospitals. One of the most important contributions of Indian PKF in Africa has been the promotion of gender equality. In 2004, India stationed its first ever all-women battalion of 125 (RPF) officers in Liberia.



## INDIA'S NAVAL POWER PROJECTION AND PIRACY MANAGEMENT WITH AFRICA

In the early modern times, the territory of Somaliland was occupied by three colonial players. One part was occupied by British, the second by Italy and the third by the French. The part occupied by the French became a new state known as Djibouti. The rest of Somaliland gained independence in 1960. In 1960, there was a coup by Siad Barre wherein took over the control of the state. Opposition rebels began to fight against Siad Barre. Two prominent opposition groups emerged, namely, the Somalia National Movement (SNM) and the United Somalia Congress (USC). The two parties, SNM and USC, started controlling the northern and southern territories and succeeded in ousting Siad Barre in 1991. Despite the ousting of Barre, no united government emerged as factionalism grew to the extent where tribal warlords began to assert control over their clans, creating a situation of complete anarchy. The tribal clans turned to piracy to sustain themselves. Absence of a stable centralised government since 1991 has aggravated stability issues making Somalia politically fragile.

Piracy as an exercise has been flourishing in the Horn of Africa region. It is primarily based in Somalia from where it spreads out in the seas affecting many nations in the Indian Ocean. Somalia is an easy base for piracy due to the absence of a stable government in the country. The US Office of Naval Intelligence has undertaken a deep study to understand the modus operandi of Somali pirates. The office is of the view that Somali pirates undertake piracy mainly for ransom money. The pirates have a well-established system of informers in foreign ports. When the ship passes through the Horn of Africa, the pirates, through well-established, specialised teams on ground and sea, launch pirate attacks. The pirate teams on the sea have in-depth knowledge of the sea and possess other maritime skills. As the pirates in Somalia have established a good network with terrorist groups operating in the Maghreb region, availability of arms is not a difficult task. Unlike pirates in the seas of South East Asia who also loot the goods from the merchant vessel and sell it in black markets, Somali pirates are only interested in taking ships hostage and demanding ransom. The merchant firms operating vessels in the region pay ransom money to get the ships released and this emboldens the pirates. At times, Somali pirates disguise themselves as coast guard and naval agencies and are able to fool the merchant vessels.



Because of rise in piracy, the cost of transporting goods has increased. The ships have started circumventing the area in favour of a longer route in deep sea to avoid piracy. Shipping firms have increased security on board of ships. The insurance firms have hiked the premiums. All this has led to an increase in the cost of trade. Nations have resorted to resolutions at the UN level. These UN level resolutions have legalised naval presence in Somali water. Countries have



stationed their navies to protect the sea-lanes of communication. India has also likewise increased its naval presence in the Horn of Africa. India has urged the UN to track the ransom money being paid by help of international agencies like Interpol. India has been advocating that all Joint Anti-Piracy Operations (JAPO) be brought under the UN ambit and domestically, all nations create laws to criminalise piracy. Indian navy has been protecting sea lines of communication since 2008. The Indian coast guard has established new district head offices in Kavarati and in Minicoy. Through naval presence in Mauritius, Seychelles and Maldives, India has been able to keep the pirates in check. India has also clarified in an annual report released by the Ministry of Defence that the Indian Ocean region is central to Indian interests and piracy in the region is a cause of serious concern, to combat, which the Indian navy is ready to play a critical role in the region. The long-term solution lies in international collaboration to criminalise ransom payment and undertake adequate social engineering to create a unified society in Somalia. A stable government, skills to the population and creation of jobs in the fishing industry can help in a big way in future.

## **AFRICA'S INTEGRATED MARITIME STRATEGY 2050, INDIA'S SAGAR DOCTRINE AND BLUE ECONOMY**

### **What is SAGAR Doctrine?**

SAGAR is a geoeconomic construct that retains a balance between maritime security and economic development which focuses on cooperation in Indian Ocean region as the core philosophy.

Today, India is in sync with Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050 which has identified the threats Africa will face in the maritime domain. In this backdrop, India's 'near term plan' is to offer Africans resources, assets and technology to their navies and coast guards so that they can guard their coasts on their own. In the long-term India is assisting the Africans in establishing an African maritime system that will enable optimal utilisation of resources of Africa. The SAGAR Doctrine of India has committed Africa assistance for capacity building and maritime infrastructure creation. India is presently working on building a coordinated, focused and institutionalised security cooperation.



# 4

## CHAPTER

# China as a Factor in India and Africa Relationship and India's Defence Diplomacy

## CLIMATE DIPLOMACY AS NEW ARENA OF INDIA–AFRICA STRATEGIC COOPERATION

The climate problems are not restricted by national boundaries but are global in nature. The solution to such problems must be transnational. The situation of Africa is that of being one of the lowest contributors of pollutants but one of the biggest sufferers of climate change. As Africa is resource-rich, the depletion of natural resources causes the continent immense anxiety. Degradation of land and environment has been at the core of a majority of the conflicts seen in Chad, Sudan-Darfur and Ethiopia. The drying up of the Nile, Orange, Zambezi and Kunene has sparked violent clashes amongst groups. If the sea levels increase, Lagos and Banjul, along with Seychelles, Mauritius, Reunion and Madagascar would be threatened. Climate change offers India a lot of opportunities to assist Africa in mitigating these challenges and helping the peace process. India has committed to the development of solar technology in IAFS-3 (2015). India may, in future, also plan assistance in wind and tidal energy. This can help the private sector of India to fetch more opportunities. Because of fluctuations related to the climate change in India and the rise in demand for agricultural commodities in 2015–16, a lot of private firms have started purchasing land in Africa. The land in Africa is under state control and is far cheaper than land in India. The private sector has undertaken mechanisation of agriculture in Africa to tide over climate change and supply agriculture commodities. From 2020, the Government of India has undertaken cultivation in Africa to mitigate domestic food shortages.

## CHINESE STRATEGIC DIPLOMACY IN AFRICA AND IMPLICATIONS ON INDIA

One of India's main competitors in Africa is China. Our aim in this part is to analyse Chinese presence in Africa and scrutinise the Chinese approach in the continent. Chinese presence in Africa goes back to the Cold War times. It was during Mao's era that the Chinese began to promote armed struggle in Africa against decolonisation, which appealed to many African states. This also gave China an opportunity to provide economic aid for decolonised nations, thereby making inroads in these states. However, the Chinese engagement in Africa emerges aggressively after the end of Cold War. As Chinese economy began to grow by the 1990s, it also began to search for resources. Africa, being a resource-rich region, was a natural choice for China. China also found Africa to be a favourable market for its goods. In order to develop Africa as a sustained supplier of resources and a market for goods, China began to undertake creation of infrastructure in Africa so that it gives China an easy route to transport resources back home. Apart from this, China has been giving a lot of economic aid to Africa. However, many are dissatisfied with the aggressive Chinese resource-centric policy towards Africans. The scholars assert that the Chinese model in Africa is based on its greed for resources. A simple algorithm lies at the heart of its policy: China goes to an African nation, sets up industries and factories, exports Chinese labour to Africa, digs out resources from the nation, brings the resources back using infrastructure they have created to connect the industry to the port. De Soysa (a scholar) remarks that in this entire Chinese model, the African country does not stand to gain anything except very little pecuniary profit in the form of taxation. The lives of ordinary Africans in that country does not change as the people receive no skill development from China so that they are absorbed in the industry. This leads to a lot



of disenchantment in the local people, leading ultimately to a kind of hatred against the Chinese presence. However, the state, instead of supporting the people, supports the Chinese in their endeavours, ultimately becoming a rentier state. This

### What is a Rentier State?

A rentier state is a state, which derives all, or a substantial portion of its national revenues from the rent of indigenous resources to external clients.

ultimately weakens institutional development in Africa. China has, as per its 'going out strategy', tried to link its domestic development to its global aspirations. The going out strategy is reflected well in Africa where China has diplomatic relations with more than 48 African nations. The basic strategy is to give Africa aid and undertake trade and diplomacy to establish a market for goods. We also need to note that Africans have an inclination for China as, firstly, African states are motivated by the Chinese state-led economic development model that has made them a regional hegemonic power. They take pride in how China, under Deng Xiaoping, started from a scratch to reach where it is today. This state directed capitalism, despite China being a communist regime, has earned it respect in Africa. Secondly, the Africans to some extent are disillusioned with

lack of development of their domestic economies despite proximate ties with West and Europe since a very long time. But the most important connecting factor between Africa and China is how the Africans are portrayed. The West has always been pessimistic about the future of Africa, partially due to deeply entrenched habits of racial profiling a feeling of racial superiority. For example, in one of the covers of *The Economist* magazine, it went on to brand Africa as a hopeless continent. In contrast, China has always appreciated African dynamism, winning a lot of confidence amongst Africans. The Chinese model is unique in Africa in the sense that China allows poorly performing corporates back home to take up opportunities in Africa. If a corporate has not been performing well, the Chinese government would encourage that company to re-emerge and prove its worth by giving it support in exploring the African market. It has been seen that, with state support, these companies are able to re-emerge powerfully. This kind of an exercise also boosts the domestic corporate sector. The networking for corporate sectors is enhanced further by interaction undertaken by China at the Forum for China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). All this gives China an opportunity to play a deeper role in Africa and gain the needed diplomatic weight at international forums. China has created Tanzania–Zambia railway line, Addis Ababa–Djibouti railway line, Mombasa–Nairobi railway line. It is developing the East Africa Master Railway Plan, Trans-Maghreb Highway and Walvis Bay Container Terminal in Windhoek to name a few. In 2018 FOCAC meeting, the Chinese have committed 60 billion dollars for development of Africa and 1 billion dollar for BRI Fund for Africa.

## CHINESE DONATION DIPLOMACY AMIDST COVID-19

In the wake of COVID-19, China has initiated "donation diplomacy" in Africa. Under this, Chinese aim to provide all sorts of medical assistance to African countries. By doing so, the Chinese are trying to position themselves as a leading provider of humanitarian support and 'public goods' in the global public health sector. Chinese, by resorting to donation diplomacy, aim to achieve three things. Firstly, this will enable the Chinese to divert attention from discussing the origins of COVID-19. Secondly, it will enable the Chinese to develop a strong amount of goodwill. Thirdly, it will support an image makeover for China. This three-point strategy enabled the Chinese to win the African support for supporting Chinese candidates as heads of FAO and WHO. Thus, Chinese have been able to use a blend of their economic heft and political influence in Africa at the time of a pandemic.

## STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF CHINESE NAVAL BASES IN AFRICA ON INDIA

China has established the first ever naval base in Africa in Djibouti. An authoritarian regime of Djibouti is quite comfortable to diplomatically deal with an authoritarian regime of China. This is an attempt by China to enhance its international clout. The base is located in the Indian Ocean and is perceived by Indian strategists as an attempt to encircle India as a part of Chinese String of Pearls Alliance network (which already includes naval bases in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka). In the recent times, Chinese are also investing in ports in Sri Lanka (Hambantota port) and Pakistan (Gwadar port) and these ports are being designed to accommodate naval vessels of China. This means that there will be an enhanced naval presence of China proximate to India. Though China has asserted that it would be using the Djibouti naval base for anti-piracy and humanitarian relief operations, but India's Research and Analysis Wing has clearly asserted that the port will have a permanent Chinese troop presence (of Chinese Marine Corps with nearly one lakh soldiers). Thus, such a strong naval presence in Indian Ocean has raised alarm bells in the South Block.



## INDIA'S DEFENCE DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA

The recent Indo-Africa ties are marked with rise in defence cooperation. In 2015, when African leaders visited India, there was a joint call by the leaders to provide defence and security-specific cooperation for Africa. Even though India has decades of cooperation with Africa in UN Peacekeeping operations and has been providing training to African defence officials, its defence diplomacy has remained very low profile. A part of the reason is that India does not have material and defence capabilities to offer deeper defence cooperation. China has taken aggressive steps to bolster its presence in this dimension where India has been providing space. Even though China does not have some exceptionally high quality conventional weapons to boast off in Africa, it is still making a dent in training where India has an edge. For instance, in 2018, China has established a Comprehensive Training Centre (CTC) in Bagamoyo in Tanzania. It is now using the CTC to provide defence training to Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. To cope up with regional crisis, China has announced the establishment of a US\$ 100 million African Rapid Response Force. Along with all this China has identified a few new areas of defence cooperation that include:

- Arms sale
- Military assistance
- Political mediation
- Conflict resolution

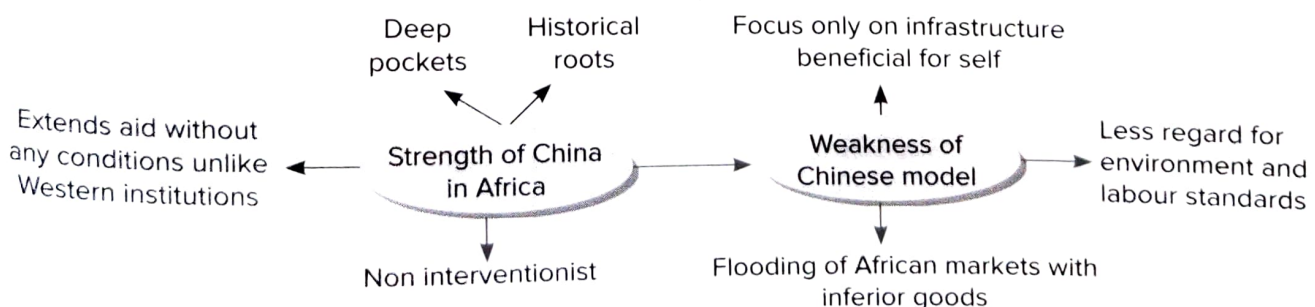
However, in 2019, China stepped into the internal security of African states which is regarded as the most important dimension. Also, in the same year it initiated 'law enforcement diplomacy'. As part of this, China is enhancing bilateral cooperation in internal security. To do this, it is exporting artificial intelligence (AI) software and new technologies such as facial recognition to boost surveillance and law enforcement capabilities. Chinese firms such as Cloud Walk Technology and Hikvision are selling face recognition technologies and CCTV cameras to Zimbabwe. There is a deep motive behind this. By entering into law enforcement and internal security, China will be able to ensure political stability and also use these states as markets to improve its algorithms. The Chinese use of big data in Africa is a starting point where China is headed in future. All this proves that India cannot ignore the defence sector as lesser engagement by India here will only give China the much needed space to pace up defence ties with Africa.

## INDIAN OCEAN REGION DEFENCE MINISTERS CONCLAVE 2021

In 2021, India hosted a conclave of Defence Ministers of states in the Indian Ocean region. In the conclave, India focused on how it has developed doctrines for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation operations, search and rescue operations and expansion of maritime domain awareness. India announced that as a part of blue economy, it intends to solely focus on peace, security and cooperation in the region.

### What is Blue Economy?

The blue economy is a paradigm of sustainable development for oceanic resources with maritime security at its fulcrum. Its core focus is on security productivity and sustainability based on a participative framework.







# 5

## CHAPTER

# India's Regional Diplomacy with Africa

### INDIA'S INTERESTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN REGION

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British took indentured labour to South Africa. Gandhi lived in South Africa and conceptualised Satyagraha. Satyagraha became a connector during freedom struggle. India supported South Africa against apartheid by not having diplomatic ties till it was abolished in 1994. India led a global crusade against apartheid, imperialism and colonialism of Africa. Since 1994, relation became pragmatic and economic-centric. India's core interests are as follows:

- Piracy, peace and maritime security
- Enhanced economic cooperation
- Global engagement via BRICS, IBSA and BASIC group (at climate change level)
- UNSC permanent membership aspiration

### INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY TO ENGAGE WITH SOUTH AFRICAN REGION

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South Africa is a strong naval player but is reluctant to project naval power as it lacks a maritime strategy. India uses Indian Ocean Rim Association as a forum to enhance maritime cooperation with South Africa. One of the most pragmatic moves has been to include South Africa in BRICS and align with the emerging economies than being dependent solely upon the West. The impact of pragmatism is visible on India–South Africa trade that has gone to reach almost 15 billion dollars at present. There is a huge demand of gold in India, and South Africa is one of the leading suppliers of gold to the country. Even the Indian private sector is quite keen to make use of South Africa as a base for sub-Saharan engagements. South Africa has a well-established financial market system, proper infrastructure and a stringent rule of law. Ranbaxy, Cipla, Tata, Mahindra are just some of the Indian firms to have made South Africa their base, to name a few. The relation between the two nations is equally strong at the multilateral level. Both are represented at IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) framework and undertake broad cooperation. At the level of WTO and climate change negotiations through the BASIC group, both are known to undertake multilateral cooperation. A peculiar feature in their relationship is that South Africa intends to uphold a pan-African position in a majority of these cases, which, at time, strains the India–South Africa cooperation.

### HURDLES IN INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH SOUTH AFRICAN REGION

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In June 2016, the annual plenary session of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) held its meeting in Seoul. In the meeting, an important agenda was India's membership to the NSG. However, some players, including South Africa, had raised procedural concerns, as a result of which India could not attain the membership in Seoul meeting. South Africa has been an ardent supporter of non-proliferation. Its non-proliferation credentials are so strong that in 1994, when South Africa ended apartheid, it went on to destroy its entire nuclear arsenal.

## POTENTIAL AREAS OF FUTURE COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND SOUTH AFRICA REGION

1. BRICS—Both have used BRICS as a platform to facilitate intra-BRICS trade, investment and cooperation at the financial level.
2. IBSA—Both have used IBSA as a platform to share expertise in development initiatives and SSC.
3. G-20—It has been used as a forum by the two sides to open cooperation in preventing illegal financial flows and promotion of trade.
4. India–South Africa Business Summit (ISABS)—The first summit happened in 2018 and the second one in 2019. In the summit, skill development, health services and digitisation of governance have been identified as core areas.

## INDIA'S INTERESTS IN EAST AFRICAN REGION

India engages with Mauritius, Madagascar, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique and Comoros in East Africa. India's interests include:

- Maritime security for trade which is strategically crucial for India's investment
- Indian naval power projection
- Protection of Indian diaspora
- Minerals for India's growth
- Petroleum and hydrocarbons supply
- Cultural relationship
- Development template for India abroad

## INDIA'S INTERESTS IN MAURITIUS: THE STAR AND KEY OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

Mauritius has a crucial location and is known for the genius of its people. As early European explorers sailed around the African continent and ventured eastwards to India, they used to call Mauritius, the 'Star and Key of the Indian Ocean'. If the Portuguese and the Dutch were the first to gain a foothold in Mauritius, it was the French who gained effective control over the island in the early 18th century. A French soldier and colonial official, Félix Renouard de Sainte-Croix, described the island as 'a central geographical point between every other place in the world'. The British who gained control over Mauritius during the Napoleonic wars and turned it into a garrison island that would help secure the sea lines of communication between Europe and India. The enduring value of its location is reflected in the fact that Diego Garcia, once part of Mauritius, today hosts one of America's largest foreign military bases in the world. The French description of the island as a 'central geographic point' holds equally true for commerce and connectivity in the Indian Ocean. As a member of the African Union, Indian Ocean Rim Association and the Indian Ocean Commission, Mauritius is a stepping-stone to multiple geographies. Mozambique, Madagascar and Comoros together constitute the Mozambique Channel, a critical waterway in the Indian Ocean, that has shaped the strategic evolution of the Indian Ocean over the centuries. It is worth recalling that Vasco da Gama, in his search for a sea route to India, sailed through the Mozambique Channel in 1498 after coming round the southern tip of Africa. Since then, the Mozambique Channel had been a major choke point in the sea lines of communication from Europe to India and further east. That might be changing as a number of factors draw international attention to the Mozambique Channel in the 21st century.

## THE THREE ISLAND CHAINS OF GEO-POWER AND INDIAN DIPLOMACY

The rise of China and East Asia as well as the slower emergence of India has deepened economic interdependence between Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The sea lines of communication between the east coast of Africa and the Far East have once again acquired some weight and importance. As old and new powers jockey for influence in the Indian Ocean littoral, every little island is becoming a contested terrain. Access to critically located islands has always been an important



part of the maritime jousting between great powers. In the Pacific, the contest is best understood as the competition to dominate the so-called island chains as a springboard for either power projection or as a defensive line against potential naval aggression. Both the American and Chinese strategic communities agree on the existence of three island chains running in concentric Pacific arcs around Asia. As great power rivalry returns to the Indian Ocean, the concept of island chains helps us understand the new regional dynamic. Three Indian Ocean island chains are coming into view. One is the Andaman Island chain that bisects the Bay of Bengal. The Great Nicobar Island at the southern tip of the chain is well placed to dominate the western gates of the Malacca Straits that link the Indian and Pacific Oceans. A second chain runs from Gwadar in the northern Arabian Sea along the Laccadives–Chagos ridge to Diego Garcia island that hosts a large American base. A third island chain flows down from Djibouti in the Horn of Africa, down along the East African coast to the Mozambique Channel through the island of Zanzibar. The islands in the South Western Indian Ocean, including Madagascar, Comoros, Seychelles and Mauritius, can be seen as part of this chain. China's deepening security ties with the littoral countries of the Bay of Bengal could begin to undermine India's geographic advantages arising from the ownership of the Andamans. On the second island chain, Delhi warily watches China's expanding naval presence on Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast and is battling to retain India's primacy in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Meanwhile, US naval presence in Chagos is coming under stress, as sovereignty over the archipelago has become the subject of an international dispute. Once dominated by the European powers, the third island chain running along the east coast of Africa to the South Western Indian Ocean has seen the dramatic expansion of Chinese economic and strategic influence over the last decade. Besides the establishment of its first military base, China has an ambitious agenda of port construction, infrastructure development and defence diplomacy. During its first term, the Narendra Modi government had done much to put Africa and the third Indian Ocean island chain on Delhi's mental map. This included decisions to enhance the diplomatic presence in Africa, initiate sustained high-level political contact and beef up security partnerships in the littoral of the South Western Indian Ocean. But the scale of the challenge confronting India in the three island chains continues to expand, amidst China's rapid strategic advance in the Indian Ocean.

## INDIA'S VANILLA ISLAND DIPLOMACY DOCTRINE

A group of Exotic Island states in the South Western Indian Ocean, the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Reunion, Seychelles, joined hands a few years ago to promote tourism to their corner in the Indian Ocean. That many of them grow vanilla, which gives us the popular ice cream flavour, was a good enough reason for calling themselves after it. Comoros has been eager to step up its engagement with India. Delhi is finally showing up; and there is much to do. As part of the growing interaction with the island states, India hosted a meet of leaders of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) on the margins of the UNGA in 2020. Together they account for more than 40 members. Their large numbers and impact on the voting patterns in the UN and other multilateral forums had always made island states of interest to major powers. Today, a number of other factors lend them additional significance. Immediate vulnerability to rising sea levels has made island states the most active champions of urgent global action to mitigate climate change. Island states have also taken the lead in developing the concept of 'blue economy' focused on sustainable use and development of ocean resources. Modi's activism on countering climate change and promoting blue economy has made the island states special partners for India. Many of the island states are also beginning to see themselves as more than specks of land in the vast blue sea. Some of them are calling themselves large 'Ocean States'. India would want to build on the multiple lines of connection with the Comoros. The island nation is a founding member of the International Solar Alliance launched by Modi in 2018. It is a member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association that Delhi has sought to revive in recent years. The Comoros is also a member of the Arab League that India always had strong ties with and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation that India has begun to reach out in recent years. In the colonial era, the Vanilla Islands were very much the object of rivalry among the European powers. With all the sea lines of communication between Europe and the Indian Ocean came round Africa and went through the Mozambique Channel, the Vanilla Islands became attractive way stations. The Comoros was of special importance as it sits at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel and provided a strong base from which to control the channel. In the 18th century, France gained the upper hand among the European powers in the Vanilla Islands. The construction of the Suez Canal linking the Mediterranean and the Red Sea in the mid-19th century obviated the need for European shipping to go round Africa. This, in turn, reduced the strategic significance of the Vanilla Islands. As African resources become important for Asian powers such as China, Japan and India, the



SLOCs from Africa's east coast and the Vanilla Islands that straddle them have once again become important. As they appreciate their renewed salience, the islands are looking to develop partnerships with the major powers. As elsewhere in the region, India can contribute significantly to the security and prosperity of the Comoros. Although India has had strong ties with one of the Vanilla Islands, Mauritius, Delhi has long seen it through the prism of the Indian diaspora. It is only recently that Delhi has begun to pay attention to the strategic dimensions of the relationship with Mauritius. During PM Modi's first term, the Indian Foreign Office set up a separate Indian Ocean Division with a focus on the island states. It clubbed Maldives and Sri Lanka with Mauritius and Seychelles, but left out the other Vanilla Islands. To be effective in the southwestern Indian Ocean, however, Delhi must begin to treat the Vanilla Islands as a single strategic space. It can build on its traditional presence in Mauritius to launch substantive economic and defence cooperation with the littoral.

## HURDLES IN INDIA'S DIPLOMACY WITH EAST AFRICA

Since long, Delhi has viewed states of East Africa through the prism of diaspora. This was, perhaps, natural since communities of Indian origin constitute a significant majority in the states of East Africa. But the time has come to reimagine states of East Africa in much larger terms.

## FUTURE AREAS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND EAST AFRICA

As new investments pour into Africa, states of East Africa are where a lot of it gets serviced. States of East Africa can be the fulcrum for India's own African economic outreach. Second, until now India has tended to deal with the so-called Vanilla Islands of the south western Indian Ocean, Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Reunion and Seychelles, on a bilateral basis. If the Indian establishment thinks of them as a collective, it could make states of East Africa the pivot of Delhi's island policy. Third, the states of East Africa pivot can facilitate a number of Indian commercial activities in the southwestern Indian Ocean as a banking gateway, the hub for flights to and from Indian cities and tourism. Fourth, India could also contribute to the evolution of states of East Africa as regional centres for technological innovation. India has not really responded so far to the demands from states of East Africa for higher education facilities from India such as the IIT. Fifth, climate change, sustainable development and the blue economy are existential challenges for states of East Africa and the neighbouring island states. The states of East Africa will be the right partners in promoting Indian initiatives in these areas. They could also become a valuable place for regional and international maritime scientific research. Finally, if Delhi takes an integrated view of its security cooperation in the southwestern Indian Ocean, states of East Africa are the natural node for it. The office of a defence adviser in Mauritius (2020) and defence attaché in Madagascar (2020), for example, can service the demands of all the island nations as well as the East African states. All this and more would be possible if Delhi takes a fresh and more strategic look at states of East Africa. One way of getting there is to have an early Indian summit with the leaders of the Vanilla Islands.

### India and Agalega Islands—Strategic Asset Development Diplomacy

The Agalega islands are almost 110 km away from Mauritius, close by to Southern coast of India. The island has a very small population but the presence of Indian diaspora is quite evident. The islands are very strategically located. In 2015, during the Indian PM's visit to Mauritius, the government of Mauritius had granted permission to India to undertake infrastructure development rights on the Agalega islands. As per the agreement, India will refurbish an existing airstrip in Agalega and develop a new jetty. There is a possibility of India installing radars in Agalega. Though the bagging of IDR does not mean that India is going to develop Agalega as a naval base, as a purely strategic investment, this certainly helps India to increase its footprint in the Indian Ocean.

## INDIA'S INTERESTS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

In West and Central Africa, India engages primarily with Nigeria, Angola and Ghana. India's interests include the following:

- Crude oil and energy security
- Defence and security diplomacy
- Education diplomacy



- Science and technology diplomacy
- Civilian nuclear cooperation
- Health partnership
- Trade in diamonds

## **INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY TO ENGAGE WITH WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

India and Nigeria have a defence-based relationship. The components in defence cooperation are those of training and capacity building. India offers training to defence officers of Nigeria at the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy in India.

In 2015, India decided to provide defence hardware to Nigeria to enhance military cooperation. Nigeria is a resource-rich country and is in possession of a lot of crude oil. India today imports anything between 8–12% of Nigerian crude oil. Nigeria, in the recent times, has tried to modify its oil selling and contract policies. Before this modification, the buyers of Nigerian oil had to purchase oil from spot markets. The problem of purchasing oil from spot markets was that it was vulnerable to price shocks. Nigeria has now started encouraging term contracts. As per a term contract, a fixed quantity of oil is to be supplied to contracting party at a stable price. Nigeria has also decided to sell oil directly to oil suppliers. In this context of a modified policy architecture, the Indian Oil Company (IOC) stands to gain as it had decided to agree for a term contract import of three million tonnes per annum crude from Nigeria in 2016. India has 700 plus firms operating in Ghana and it is the second largest investor in Ghana with investments in nuclear power development, rural electrification and agriculture research as core areas. India and Ghana have a robust defence relation because both states cooperate in UN PKF. Ghana is a victim of terror from ISIS and Boko Haram. Angola is one of the largest suppliers of oil to India. India's major items of export to Angola include transportation equipment, tractors, agricultural machinery and rice; and imports include majorly crude oil. The state-owned SONANGOL is the oil regulator and supplier in Angola. Apart from oil, Angola is also rich in diamonds.

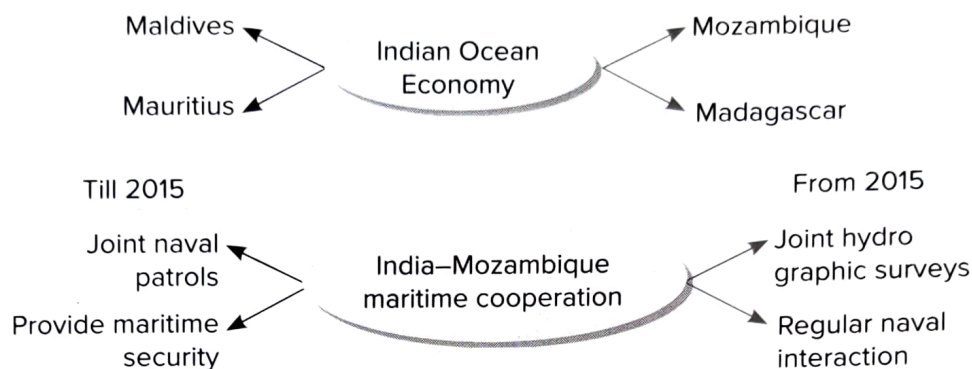
## **HURDLES FACED BY INDIA IN DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT WITH WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

Oil purchase from spot market versus oil purchase from term contract issue was the key hurdle in the ties. In 2017, at the 4th India–Africa Hydrocarbon Conference in New Delhi, India had committed to double its oil imports from Nigeria and this is yet to happen. As per R. Ghanshyam, IFS and India's High Commissioner to Nigeria, there is immense trade potential between India and Nigeria, which can be significantly enhanced if both nations try to guarantee investment protection. Ghana is looking for trade in small arms and does not find a reliable player in the region to support its requirements. The population of Ghana is growing and it needs energy availability, but as it is a signatory to African NW Free Trade Zone; this prohibits it to export Uranium to India and has emerged as a hurdle in nuclear cooperation. Angola is a rural economy, so not much scope for trade exists. This means India will find it difficult to explore Angola as a market.

## **FUTURE AREAS OF COOPERATION**

Because of the diversification of the Nigerian economy, tremendous scope for Indian investment in infrastructure, and energy education, financial inclusion and poverty alleviation can be envisaged. In Nigeria, healthcare is a neglected area. The Nigerian government has not yet equipped Nigerian healthcare with the needed capacity. This provides an opportunity for India. More so, in Nigeria there is an attitude amongst people to give preference to anything which is foreign. This attitude is most visible in healthcare. Every month, more than 5000 people on an average fly abroad for treatment. A lot of Nigerians also come to India as treatments in India are cheaper than in the US and Europe. However, the lack of connectivity via direct flights between India and Nigeria creates a difficulty in mobilisation of patients. Thus, two things can be done to leverage the opportunity. First, to take medical tourism to its full potential, we can enhance flight connectivity with daily, regular direct flights; and secondly, encourage Indian hospitals to open up hospitals to cater to the market in Nigeria itself

(for instance, Apollo hospital has opened a hospital in Nigeria lately). India is looking for defence exports in West Africa and Ghana is a potential future player. Sharing of intelligence and technical information can enable both to open up a new chapter in terrorism prevention. As Ghana is looking for players for nuclear energy in West African Power Pool Project, which aims to integrate national power system to a unified market; India, with its nuclear credentials can be a potential player. Angola is refurbishing its colonial railway and RITES India is providing technical assistance for this. India has provided locomotives and wagons. Lately, a lot of Indian companies are showing interest in rural and urban housing as the housing and construction industry in Angola is witnessing a boom.



## QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

S. No.	Questions for Practice
1.	A far wider cultural engagement with the continent is necessary to combat the latent racism among Indians. Examine the statement in the light of racial attacks on Africans in India.
2.	India's attitude towards Africa cannot remain imprisoned in the 'dark continent' stereotype. Neither can it be defined solely by the legacy of the colonial era. Our language of engagement needs to create a new edifice defined by an aspirational Africa's quest for a good life. Sketch your argument.
3.	Indian interests in Africa will benefit from timely implementation of projects. Examine the statement in the light of key hurdles in implementation of projects by India in Africa.
4.	The Chinese naval base in Africa is likely to have consequences on India's security interests in the Indian Ocean. Examine.
5.	Sustained India-Japan cooperation in Africa can match China's substantial outreach to Africa. Examine this statement in the light of the vision of the Asia-Africa growth corridor.
6.	From the age of colonialism to age of globalisation, India and Africa have done much together but there do exist challenges and frontiers that need to be crossed. Discuss.



## SECTION 7

# INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH WEST ASIA

- 1. West Asia: Islam, Repression, Resistance and Great Power Games
- 2. Key Drivers of India's West Asia Policy
- 3. The Modi Doctrine for West Asia, India as Net Security Provider Policy and QUAD-2
- 4. Arab Spring, Crisis in Libya, Syria, Yemen and Strategic Significance of Abraham Accords
- 5. India's Relationship with Saudi Arabia and Iran: The Doctrine of Sunni-Shia Balancing
- 6. The Israel-Palestine Conflict, India's Relationship with Israel and India's Palestine Policy

### AN OVERVIEW

The section on Middle East has gained prominence in recent times. The UPSC has asked questions related to India's Look West Policy many a times. Repeated questions have been asked on India's relationship with Israel and India-Palestine policy. The changing nature of India's policy in balancing shia and sunni powers with the engagement of jews is an engaging topic.

**Potential foresight** In the recent years, with Israel shifting the sands in Arab world and improving ties with the Sunni nations, the implications of such policy on Indian foreign policy is a favourite arena of UPSC. The students also need to prepare the dimensions of de-hyphenation of Saudia Arabia's policy for India and Pakistan. I2U2 alliance, India's Israel and Palestine policy and India's shift on east Jerusalem diplomacy, well analysed in this section, will be important for years ahead.



# 1

## CHAPTER

# West Asia: Islam, Repression, Resistance and Great Power Games

### ORIGIN OF ISLAM

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The rise of Islam is intrinsically linked with the Prophet Muhammad. He was born to Abd Allah Ibn Abd al-Muttalib (father) and Aminah (mother). Abu Talib, who belonged to the Banu Hashim clan of the Quaraysh tribe, raised him. He got married to Khadija. Muhammad was a worker. In his mid-forties, he took retirement. During his prayers at the Mount Hira cave, he received revelations from the Angel Gabriel, which was the God's message transmitted to Muhammad. These revelations became the foundation of the religion today, known in the world as Islam. Muhammad faced a lot of difficulties to convince people about the revelations of God but he succeeded in creating the foundation of Islam.

### THE CALIPHATES AFTER PROPHET MUHAMMAD

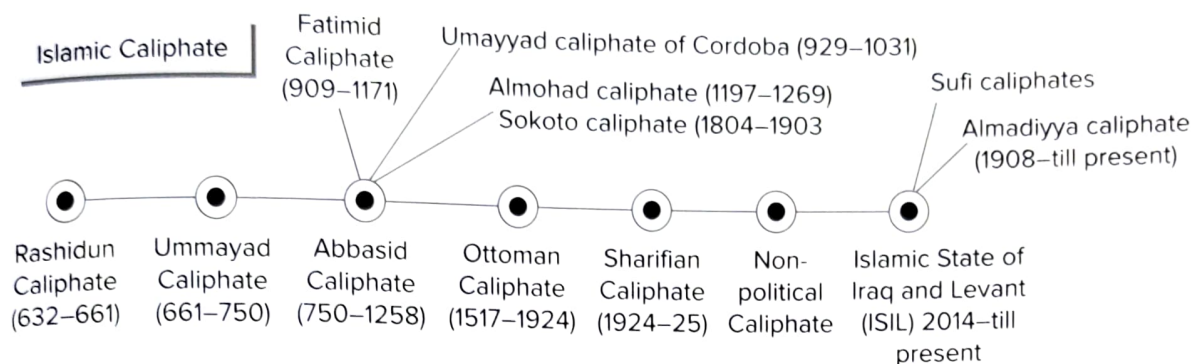
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After the death of Muhammad, Abu Bakr became the new successor. Abu Bakr established the first ever caliphate institution and became a Caliph after Muhammad. Nearing his death, Abu Bakr desired that Umar would be his successor as the Caliph. Umar established a committee of six to decide his successor. The committee arrived at a unanimous decision that the Caliph after Umar would be chosen from the six members. The committee chose two successors—Uthman and Ali. During the times of Umar as the Caliph, Islam grew into a huge empire. Now, the empire needed a Caliph who would be a politico-military genius-like Uthman, while Ali was a religious man and he was also the son-in-law of Muhammad. Uthman belonged to Umayyad clan that was wealthy and eventually succeeded Umar as the Caliph. The period of Umayyads saw a dynastic rule. Ali, who had been side-lined, did not appreciate the idea of Uthman as a Caliph and he advocated that someone hailing from the lineage of Muhammad would hold that caliphate. Thus, there was a growing rebellion against Uthman as a Caliph. During the reign of Uthman and Umar, Islam had spread outside Arabia to Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Persia. However, after a few years, Egyptian Muslim rebels killed Uthman. After the death of Uthman, the caliphate now came under Ali who ascended the caliphate as the fourth Caliph. Ali faced a lot of challenges as a Caliph. Many people felt Ali was ineffective in punishing the killers of Uthman and some even suspected Ali's involvement in the murder. Uthman's cousin Muawiyah was a member of Umayyad clan and the Governor of Syria. At the time of Ali's reign, Muawiyah claimed the caliphate for himself. Ali refused to accept Muawiyah as a Caliph and advocated the need to get Islam back to the ethical path. A group of people known as Kharijites, who first appeared during the time of third Caliph Uthman were the followers of Ali. To manage Muawiyah, Ali began to bargain with the Umayyads. The Kharijites felt that Ali betrayed them by talking to Umayyads and subsequently assassinated him. Meanwhile, after the death of Muawiyah, his son Yazid succeeded him as a Caliph and defeated Hussein, son of Ali, at the Battle of Karbala, marking the full schism in Islam. Abu Muhammad Hasan ibn Ali succeeded Ali and the successors of Ali came to be known as Imams, while the Umayyad and Muawiyah adopted a caliphate monarchy.



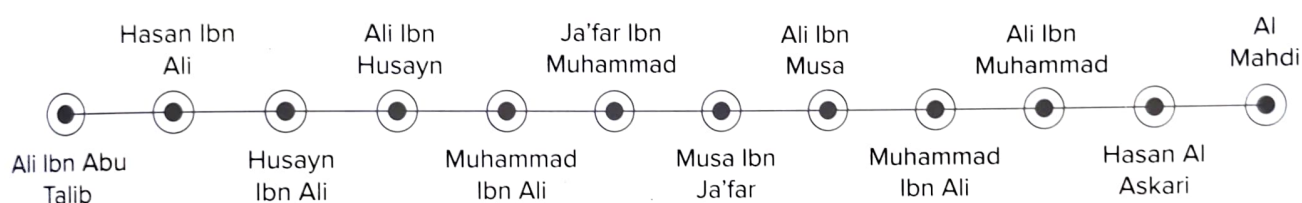
## THE SCHISM AND RISE OF SHIITE AND SUNNI ISLAM

In 638 AD, the faith was split into two main sects namely, the Shias and Sunnis. The Sunnis believed that the leader of Islamic faith would be elected from the successors of Prophet Muhammad whereas the Shias believed that the leaders would come from the descendants of the Prophet.



The Shia Muslims believe that Ali was the first Imam and Abu Muhammad Hasan ibn Ali was the second. For Shias, the eleventh Imam was Hasan Al Askari. Today, amongst the Shia Muslims, one school of thought believes that Hasan Al Askari had no surviving sons but another sect known as the Qatiyyas believes that Muhammad al-Mahdi is the son of Hasan Ali Askari and he is in hiding somewhere and shall come to guide the Shias.

### Twelve Imams of Shia Islam



Broadly speaking, Muslims are divided into four branches, namely Shias, Sunnis, Kharijites and Quaranists. The Quaranists are those who hold Quran to be the authentic source of Islamic faith and reject different recorded oral traditions or Hadith. The Shias and Sunnis are further divided into various sub-groups.

## POLITICAL ISLAM AND SHARIA

Political Islam is an assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws and policies which are Islamic in nature. The proponents of political Islam argue that their precepts aid restoration of authentic and original Islam which is cleansed from various innovations that have crept in Islam over the years. The society consequently created would be one which is the closest to the order envisaged by holy Prophet in Medina and the first four Caliphs.

The origin of political Islam in the modern times can be traced back to the colonial period when Arab states and other Muslim-dominated lands were overtaken by colonial powers. The loss of dignity at the hands of Western imperial powers compelled the Muslim intellectuals to look within and ascertain a path of reform. The concern of intellectuals in the 19th and the 20th century was how to implement Sharia, Islamic rules and institutions determined by Prophet Muhammad of which he was a part of.

The initial source of Sharia was the revelations of Allah to his Prophet, Muhammad, who was enshrined in the Quran, and the sayings and conduct of the Prophet, based on the testimony of his contemporaries, which were collectively the Sunna. In terms of Islamic law, the Quran and the Sunna are part of the 'revelation' and both enjoy an equal status.

The Sharia has evolved over several centuries and in the early period, the text of the Quran was finalised along with Prophet's traditions, known as Hadith, by the efforts of the scholars, called ulema, labouring on their own or in schools across the Muslim empire which was witnessing expansion. An effort was subsequently made to standardise the understanding of these texts in the Muslim realm by 'traditionalisation' of the revelation by tracing all legal principles and rules back to the revealed texts.

## THE IJMA AND QIYAS

These processes, as discussed above, was neither sufficient nor lucid enough to permit plain readings that could be applied to the different situations in which jurists had to adjudicate. Consequently, the instrument of *ijtihad*, that is, the development of new rules of law through a re-interpretation of the basic sources was brought in. This instrument consisted of two systems. The first was *Qiyas* where analogies were drawn from one case and applied to similar cases in accordance with the prescribed methods, and the second was *Ijma*, where consensus on what is acceptable within a group of Muslims was sought.

## THE SIYASA SHARIIYA

Since the earliest times, it is interesting to note that the commentators made a basic distinction in the content of the revealed sources, called *Ibadat*, which means the relation of man to God, and *muamalat*, which means relation of man with other men. While the former was seen as eternal principles for the sole purpose of worship which could not be changed at all; the latter were used for the good of man and society and a change was permissible in the same with times. Scholars, however, developed the concept of *maslahah*, which in generic sense means public welfare, public interest and common good, as guiding principles for the application of law in specific cases. Then came the concept of *siyasa shariiya* meaning to rule according to the Sharia, which effectively meant that, in a given set of circumstances, the Muslim ruler or judge could accord priority to notions of public interest in the "spirit" of the Sharia without adhering to the letter of the Sharia, thereby giving primacy to spirit over the letter.

## HANAFI, SHAFEI, MALIKI AND HANBALI ISLAM

The scholars in different parts of the Islamic world attempted to understand and explain the meaning of the revealed texts called *fiqh*, meaning law and applied them in different situations, leading to the rise of four schools or *madhabs* of Sunni Islam. Each of these schools took a few decades to concretise primarily on the basis of their writings, founders and students associated. They were fully developed by the early 11th century, and each school had their own adherents in geographical areas of Islamic world. The four schools that emerged were Hanafi, Shafei, Maliki and Hanbali and each had much in common in terms of the application of their legal precepts, while they did differ with respect to their methodology and their emphasis placed on certain concepts over others. The authoritative or established views of a school were collectively known as *taqlid*.

## MIDDLE EAST OR WEST ASIA? UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGY DILEMMAS AND INDIA'S ARTICULATION

There is always a debate on what exactly constitutes Middle East or West Asia and how do we exactly address the region. It is important to remember that there exists no official or scholarly consensus on the terms and the terms used are based on how different nations have viewed the constructs. In 1902, Alfred Thayer Mahan, a distinguished writer on sea power, used the term Middle East for the first time, but till date no clarity exists about territories that should be included in the construct. India never accepted this Eurocentric conception where Europe was placed at the centre of the world affairs. India, after independence, preferred to use terminologies to define regions that were based on an objective geographic criteria. After independence, India created "West Asia-North Africa Division" in Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) which was mandated to look after region extending from Iran in east to Sudan in south. In the mid-1980s, after rising influx of Indian nationals in Gulf, India conceptualised a separate "Gulf Division". However, it was believed that since



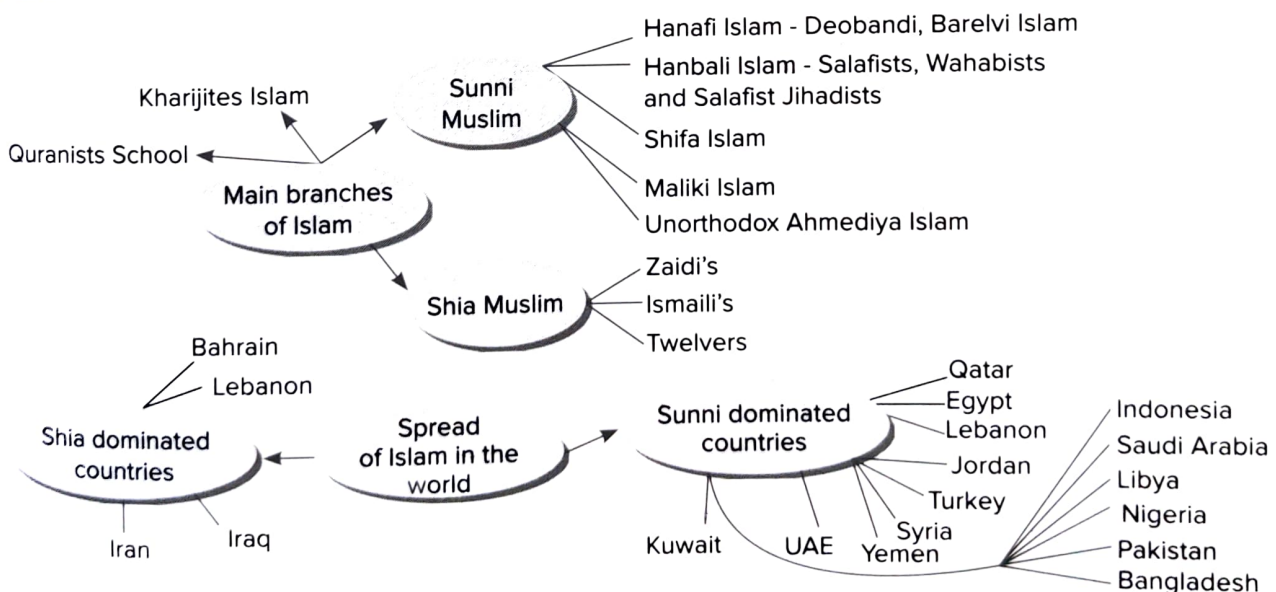
the Gulf Division would also be looking after the Hajj section, Iran would feel isolated and thus, the MEA decided to put Iran under the "Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran" division.

## THE INSECURE REGIONAL BATTLES AND IMPLICATIONS ON INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

The region of West Asia has been dominated by a power play of Arabs, Jews, Turks and Persians. These four power centres have not just interacted commercially but have shaped the civilisation of the region through philosophy, art and wars. This civilisational narrative had been disrupted by invasions of Romans and Greeks to begin with, then British and French and finally by the Americans in the modern times. When Europe began to witness Industrial Revolution, the Arabs, Turks and Persians were colonised and the colonisers erected local puppet rulers who would help the imperial powers to crush local rebellions whenever they arose. This eventually weakened the people, the natives, who began to feel so helpless that they began to think that they had no control over their destinies. The colonial rulers did not just stop here but also brought thousands of Jews from Europe to settle in Palestine and later created the Jewish state of Israel. These Zionist settler colonialism ignored the existence and rights of the indigenous people and left a legacy of bitterness and outrage, which has poisoned the region till date. Today, this bitterness between the Arabs and Jews has manifested as racial discrimination, abuse and has unleashed a culture of violence.

The other issue with West Asia is that the region has produced two political models and none have successfully created strong nation states. On one side of the spectrum is a group of states that display republican form of government where coups have led to rise of rulers who have tried to claim legitimacy by rhetoric of nationalism, socialism and revolution. On the other side of spectrum is the six Gulf states that show monarchical form of governments which claim legitimacy through authoritarian rule. The republican states are led by strongmen who have failed to enforce economic development strategies while the monarchical states are equally weak but supported by the West for oil and gas sales in global markets. In this sense, the West is not just an entity that ensures global sales of their resources but also acts as a guardian of the royal families. In either case, we see the West Asian states as 'fierce states' or states that control the destiny of their citizens through coercion.

### MIND MAP





# 2

## CHAPTER

# Key Drivers of India's West Asia Policy

## HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP OF INDIA AND WEST ASIA

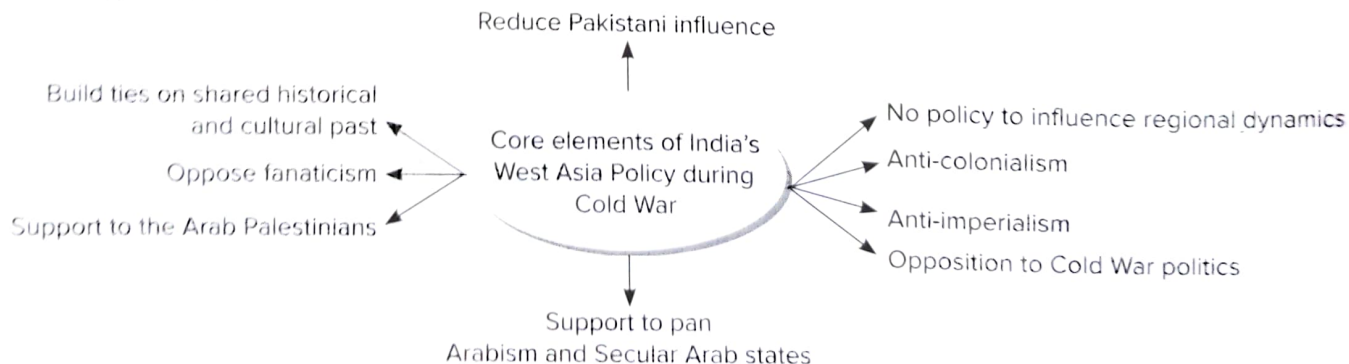
India and West Asia (hereafter referred to as WA) have a civilisational link with the ties going back to Indus Valley civilisation, when trade in turquoise, copper and spices were common. Indian merchants were present in WA even before the coming of Islam and the Indian merchants had trade with Mecca. Since 6th century BCE, Indians also undertook trade with Jews, who were the only community to trade along India's west coast. The coming of the British added a new geostrategic outlook to the Indo-West Asia trade. For the British, WA acted as a land bridge to Asia, Afghanistan and Europe and was strategically located with links to the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea and access to Arabian Sea. The East India Company controlled India and the WA region through the Persian Gulf Residency (PGR). The PGR remained a subdivision of East Indian Company till 1857. After the 1857 revolt in India, the British crown assumed all responsibilities. The British Indian empires subsequently built outposts in the Gulf to safeguard marine trade. The British used the Indian rupee in Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain. The RBI continued to use the rupee in the above states till 1959.

### What is 1973 Oil Crisis?

The crisis occurred after the Yom-Kippur War in 1973 when Arab states, after their defeat in the war, decided to impose an oil embargo on West, putting the US economy on the verge of collapse due to no availability of oil. The crisis was defused through deft diplomacy and an oil boom followed.

## INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH WEST ASIA DURING THE COLD WAR

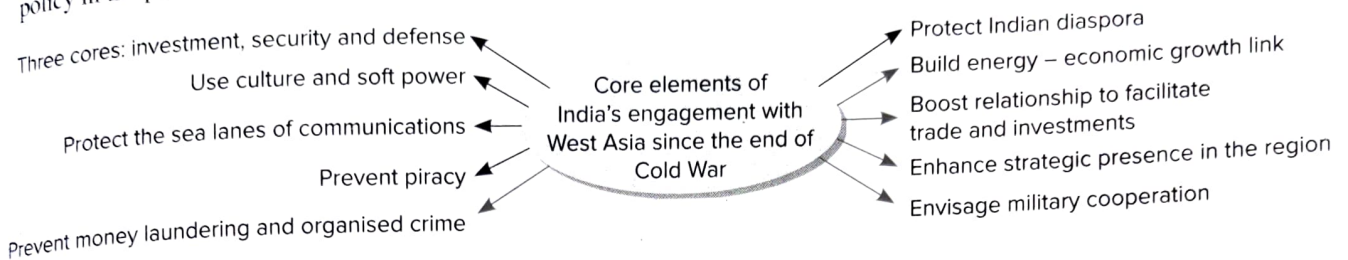
After India became independent, India followed a two-point policy in WA. It politically supported the Arabs and enhanced support to their leaders who focused on secularism and socialism. During this period, India would often criticise Israel and censure it for aggression in the Middle East. Pakistan remained a stumbling block in India's ties with the region because Pakistan would often use Islamic connections to negate Indian role in the region. The 1973 oil crises led to a subsequent oil boom in WA. This led to the rise of pro-West monarchs such as Saudi Arabia, with exceptions remaining. The oil boom witnessed a rise in the migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers to the Gulf. This allowed India to sustain its relations with Gulf States during the rest of the Cold War.





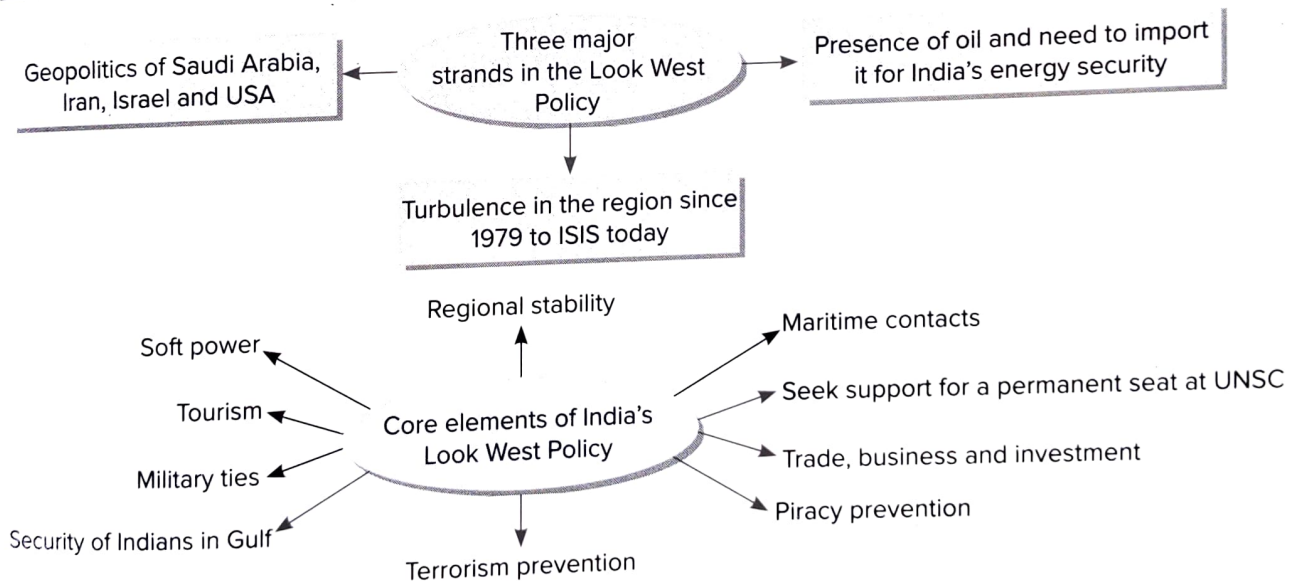
## INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH WEST ASIA SINCE THE END OF COLD WAR

At the end of the Cold War, India realised the significance of remittances from its diaspora in the Gulf. As India embraced globalisation at the end of the Cold War, the Indian diaspora began to witness a shift. The earlier unskilled diaspora now began to be complemented by a new white collar diaspora that specialised in IT and the services sector. The tenets of the policy in the post-Cold War period are summarised in the diagram below.

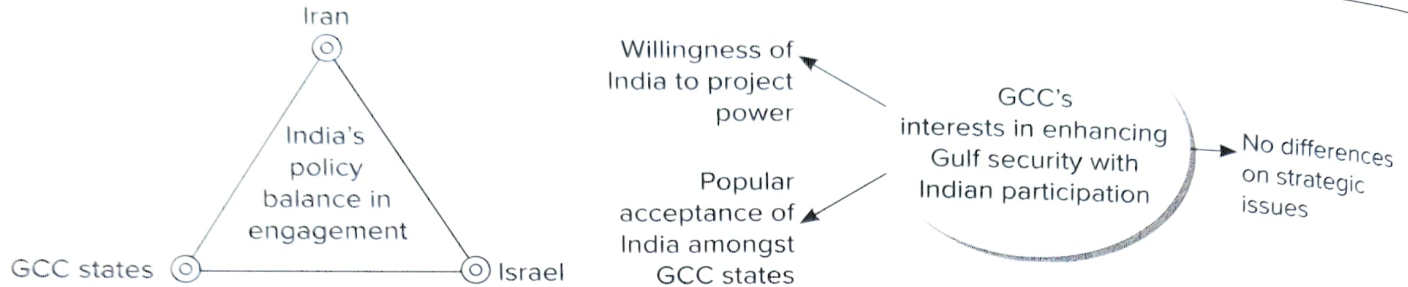


## INDIA'S LOOK WEST POLICY

For India, there are three broad regions to engage in West Asia. The first is the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. The core dimensions of engagement here are trade, the Indian diaspora, oil and prevention of terrorism. In the second region of Mashreq (Turkey and Central Asia), trade and connectivity are crucial dimensions. The third is the Maghreb region, which is crucial for oil, trade and prevention of piracy. In 2005, Dr. Manmohan Singh announced a Look West Policy (LWP) and stated that West Asia is a part of India's extended neighbourhood. He advanced the idea of pursuing economic relations with the Gulf. India also shed-off the anti-Israel rhetoric and has enhanced ties with Israel. India has realised that West Asia is not a region to display power but to augment power and this compelled India to announce its Look West Policy. The policy has the following goals as given below.



India's LWP got a new momentum with Narendra Modi's recent visits to the region. As global energy markets witness the turmoil due to shale revolution, the Middle Eastern states are keen to explore dimensions other than oil. The failure of the West to emerge as a reliable player has led the GCC to adopt "Look at India" policy. In order to achieve this, many Middle Eastern states initiated a Look East Policy and it is in this context that India assumes more significance.



The Gulf has also emerged as Indian Navy's primary area of maritime interests. India has learned not to interfere in any state's internal affairs and limit its influence only to achieve self-interest. The Indian policymakers, under LWP, have striven for a fine balance between Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel, while supporting Palestinians. This balancing act has given India a larger space to manoeuvre in the region with ease.



# 3

## CHAPTER

# The Modi Doctrine for West Asia, India as Net Security Provider Policy and QUAD-2

## THE MODI DOCTRINE FOR WEST ASIA

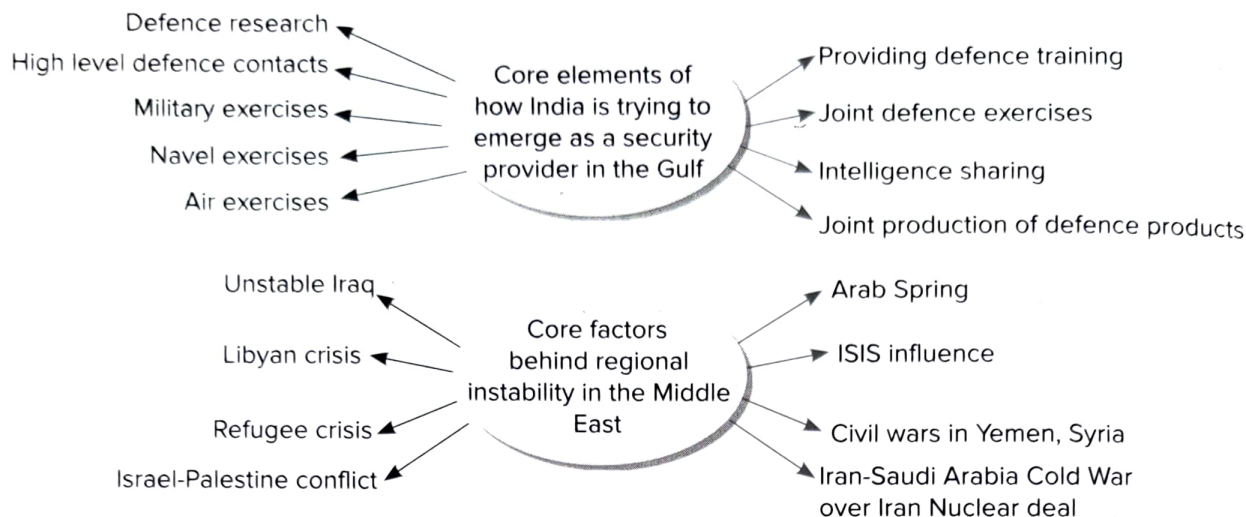
The foreign policy of Modi in West Asia is driven by two drivers. Firstly, Modi is outdistancing his predecessors by going beyond the ties of energy, trade and investment to explore new and untapped areas of collaboration. Secondly, his focus is to add more strategic content to the relationship in every dimension. In pursuit of this thinking, today India and states in West Asia, especially GCC, are exploring engagements in dimensions that range from renewable energy to desert ecology to communications technology to support for start-ups. Also, each of the engagements has a strategic element of cooperating jointly in shared perceptions and approaches on security issues. Today, India has identified that shared threats to peace, security and stability are the core areas where a shared endeavour must be created to address the concerns. There is gradual realisation between states of the Gulf and India that they can cooperate together to promote regional peace, reconciliation and stability in Gulf and Indian Ocean region.

## NARENDRA MODI'S WEST ASIA STRATEGY

India, under Modi, as part of LWP, is adopting a three-point strategy. First, it is expanding its domestic biofuel programme. Second, India has drastically expanded its strategic petroleum reserves. Third, India is striving to diversify its oil imports from West Asia. The core elements of India's engagement in West Asia under Modi government are economy, counter-terrorism and defence. A new element under Modi government has been of positioning India as a net security provider. It has the following ingredients: Conditions of peace and stability in individual littoral states; freedom to all states of the Gulf littoral to exploit their hydrocarbon and other natural resources and export them; freedom of commercial shipping in international waters of the Persian Gulf; freedom of access to, and outlet from, Gulf waters through the Strait of Hormuz; prevention of conflict that may impinge on the freedom of trade and shipping and prevention of emergence of conditions that may impinge on any of these considerations.

## INDIA'S NET SECURITY PROVIDER POLICY IN WEST ASIA





## THE QUAD-2: A STRATEGIC GAME CHANGER

In 2021, the Indian Minister of External Affairs met with his Israeli, UAE and American counterparts. This meeting led the media to instantly signal the birth of a new 'minilateral' called QUAD-2. This is called QUAD-2 because the QUAD-1 comprises the US, India, Australia and Japan. The QUAD-2 is a new buzzword in the regional geopolitics and it is likely

### QUAD-2: Will it help Indian Foreign Policy?

There exists a lot of concern on the role that India is likely to play in the new minilateral. This is because India has historically remained non-prescriptive, non-intrusive and non-hegemonic in engagement with West Asia. With the US and Israel in the grouping, both of whom have followed the policy approaches of prescriptions, intrusions and fight for hegemony; defining how India will play its cards is not clear. Also, India does not view QUAD-2 as anti-Iran while the other members do view it as anti-Iran. In this sense, India is not in a position right now to choose between Sunnis or Shias as it needs both.

to focus on climate change, energy, maritime security and trade. The nations of this new minilateral have focused on establishing new joint working groups to take the cooperation further in the stated dimensions. While there does appear to be a lot of enthusiasm for this new grouping, but there is no clarity on what does the QUAD-2 mean for regional politics and what is the role for India in the same. As of now, there appears to be no strategic interest in the quartet that binds it because most of the issues identified for cooperation are already being discussed bilaterally. In this sense, the term appears more of a public relation exercise of Biden Administration to showcase to the American audience a new foreign policy buzz in the region by a new President.

## INDIA AND UAE COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (CEPA): AN ANALYSIS

The Modi government has accelerated India's economic diplomacy in the Middle East and this is visible with India and UAE signing a CEPA in February 2022. The CEPA was enforced from May 2022 and signifies a new dimension of strategic economic cooperation. India and UAE enjoy a deep historical relationship which has been nurtured by exemplary civilisational ties. The trade between India and UAE, which was 180 million in 1970s, has increased to 60 billion in 2019–2020. Apart from being a key partner in helping India with energy, UAE has also emerged as a crucial partner in sustaining India's infrastructural growth. To deepen their economic cooperation, the CEPA has been concluded in the recent times by the two states. The CEPA will now provide India and UAE greater market access through preferential tariff rates. This is so because the two sides have identified a list of goods where they will not just reduce but even eliminate customs duty on originating goods.

A careful analysis of the CEPA tells us that a large amount of goods have been brought down to zero per cent tariffs and the two sides have decided to eliminate tariffs on the remaining goods in the next five to seven years. For trade in services, India has decided to provide market access to 100 sub-sectors of UAE. Indian service providers will now have access to engineering, communication, business, health, financial and social services etc. The CEPA also focuses on digital trade and the two sides have decided to maintain a legal framework that will govern digital transactions and these transactions



will also be in compliance with the UNICTRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce, 2006. To prevent the misuse of the CEPA, the two sides have developed a framework that will mention rules of origin and origin criteria which shall be used to obtain certificate of origin for goods. Export promotion is the philosophy that guides the thought from the side of the Indian government. This will be a valuable tool for India to allow the Indian industry to make inroads into UAE. Over the next five years, the quantum of the bilateral trade will rise to 100 billion USD and the CEPA will generate one million jobs in India in sectors that range from agriculture, leather, footwear and pharmaceuticals.



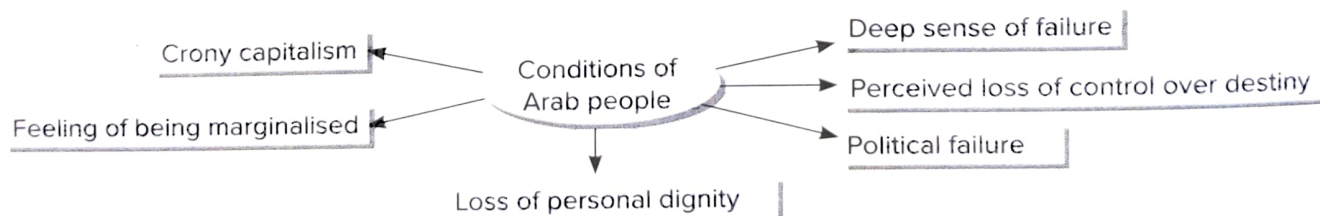
# 4

## CHAPTER

# Arab Spring, Crisis in Libya, Syria, Yemen and Strategic Significance of Abraham Accords

## ARAB SPRING AND LIMITS ON INDIA'S WEST ASIA POLICY

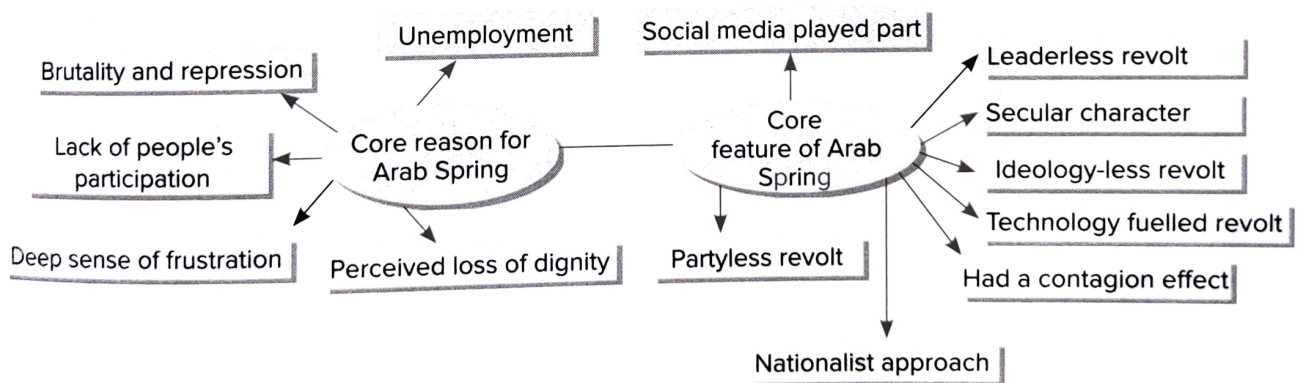
Islam, after its origin, has spread as an ideology or religion to places and had a lot of interaction with different cultures all over the world. However, after 1453, the Fall of Constantinople led to subsequent Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution and this saw the rise of Christianity in Europe. Islamic scholars perceived the rise of Europe as the rise of Christianity. This time also coincided with the beginning of imperialism. The western intrusion in the body politic of states led to a new discourse. Many scholars of Islam sensed a feeling of defeat and began to introspect. Some believed that the reason Christianity flourished was because of advancements in science (fuelled by the Renaissance and geographical discoveries) while others believed it was because of military superiority. Some Islamic scholars advocated deep introspection within and presented an idea of going back to pristine Islam as they felt that Muslims have deviated from their true faith. They felt that going back to pristine Islam would lead to Islam present a counter to rising Christianity. In the modern times, British and the French decided to control the Middle East for oil to sustain their Industrial Revolution. The World Wars also led to redrawing of the boundaries of the Middle East, done in a manner to suit the imperial interests than the interests of the natives. This territorial demarcation at the end of World Wars created a deep sense of resentment amongst the Arabs. The period after World War II and the Cold War saw the US emerging as a new power. The Cold War period in the Middle East witnessed a rise of military dictators and dynastic dictators (as in Saudi Arabia, Iraq etc.). In 1973 there was an oil crisis (explained in the chapter of India and Israel Relations). It led to the oil embargo. When the embargo was removed, the lifting of the embargo financially strengthened the dictators but the financial benefits did not percolate to the Arab citizens. The population at large was still left out and felt humiliated to see how their leaders (authoritarian rulers) co-opted by the West.



Some Islamic scholars in the Arab world decided to reassert the influence of Islam, and they decided to use Jihad as a tool for the same. The US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan played a key role in revival of Jihad when Soviet invaded Afghanistan in 1979. The US used Jihadis to contain the Soviet influence in Afghanistan while Saudi Arabia spread Wahabism through Jihad and began to urge people in Pakistan and Afghanistan to return to pristine Islam. The Islamic scholars believed that the Americans are genuinely here to help the Muslims in their rejuvenation. The Salafism Jihadism that emerged during the Cold War was perceived as the first response to regain control over destiny. In this process, the religious fighters or

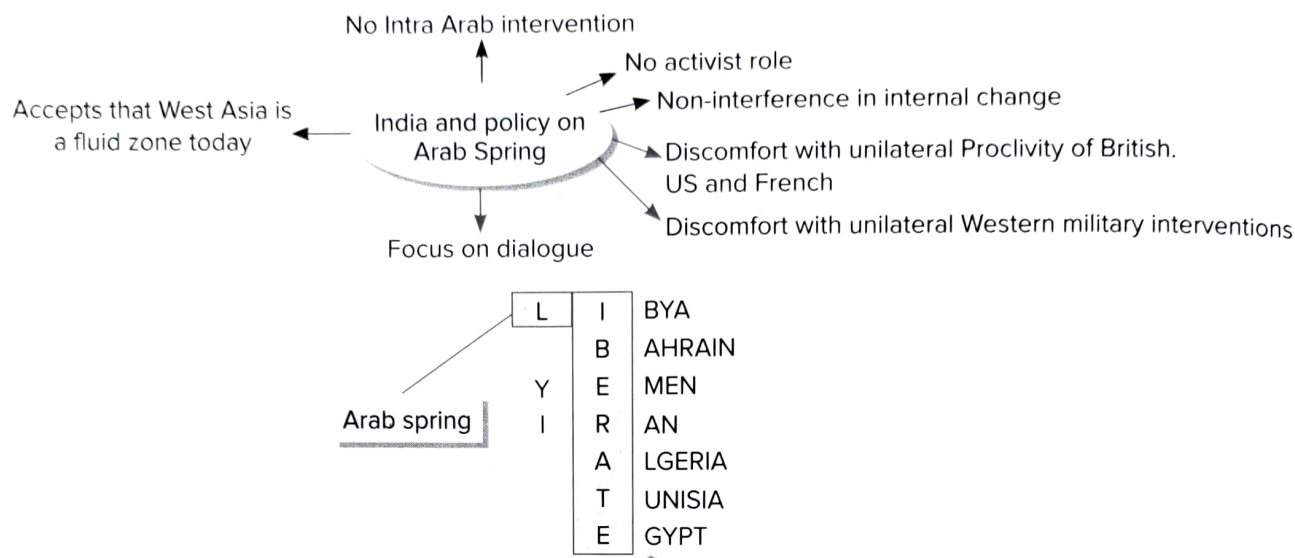


Mujahedeen were created to fight Communism in Afghanistan as the US had propagated to these Islamic scholars that they witness a threat to their existence from Russia. However, the Americans and Saudis, who had supposedly created these religious monsters, rapidly lost control over them because after Communists in Afghanistan were defeated, Mujahedeen began to realise that they were used by the Americans to fight Cold War and the Americans had no intention to help rejuvenation of Islam. The Soviet episode strengthened the anti-West fault lines amongst the Islamic scholars. Islamic scholars decided to seek revenge against the US and that revenge manifested as 9/11 attacks. Post-9/11 we saw the US invasion of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). The 9/11 was used by the US to create a narrative of Islamophobia in the Christian world. The Arabs again were fatigued with increased violence and consequences caused by the Holy war or Jihad. It was now well accepted by the Muslims in the world that radicalism was not the answer. There was a huge intellectual vacuum felt by Arab citizens who had legitimate grievances against their leaders and realised that violence certainly was no answer. What contributed to more frustration in the Arab world was a series of Arab Human Development Reports that emerged from 2002 onwards till 2009. All these Arab Human Development Reports pointed out to lack of social development of Arab citizens. These reports also contributed to a deep sense of loss of dignity amongst the Arab people. The common Arab citizen was frustrated due to brutal suppression by their leaders, high prices of commodities, rising unemployment and rampant corruption. It is in this backdrop of historical suppression that the spark came from Tunisia in December 2010 when a street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, self-immolated himself due to suppression by Tunisian police. Self-immolation in Islam is a forbidden act, as it is believed that a person indulging in immolation will find no place in heaven. This act of self-immolation became a political statement leading to mass agitations in Tunisia against the ruler Ben Ali, who promptly ordered his forces to militarily suppress the protestors. The military forces refused to act on orders and rather joined the masses against him. This ultimately led to the downfall of Ben Ali. The revolution that happened in Tunisia was called Jasmine revolution because jasmine is culturally important for Tunisians—in the month of December, a lot of vendors in Tunisia sell jasmine flowers. The Tunisians appreciate the purity and the scent of the jasmine. It was called Jasmine revolution, as the idea was to purify Tunisia and clean it up from the corrupt government held by Ben Ali, thus led to the beginning of the Arab Spring. Because of this Jasmine revolution in Tunisia, on 20th January 2011, the Democratic Constitutional Rally, the party under Ben Ali was banned. On 1st March 2011, the Nahda Party in Tunisia was legalised to contest future elections. Ben Ali was convicted for embezzlement of public funds even though he had lived in exile in Saudi Arabia since his ouster. The unrest from Tunisia spread to Egypt. Egypt, since 1980, was under the rule of Hosni Mubarak, another corrupt dictator. The protestors occupied the Tahir Square in Cairo to demand the ousting of Hosni Mubarak. Post-Arab Spring, Egypt witnessed a power tussle between Muslim Brotherhood (a socio-political organisation in Egypt) and the Egyptian army.



## WHY IS THE REVOLUTION IN THE ARAB STATES CALLED ARAB SPRING?

Spring is a new season when normally the ice melts, winters end and new beginnings happen. The term at political level was first used in 1968, in Prague, when it achieved political liberalisation. The winter in political connotation signified a controlled society with a high degree of oppression exercised by a ruler and no freedom for the people. The spring signified a change from the winter. This is what the Arab Spring that began in December 2010 in Tunisia signified.

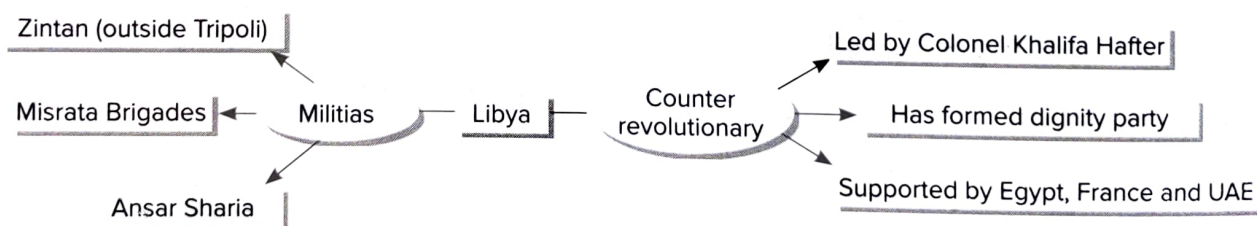


## INDIA'S POLICY ON ARAB SPRING

India has followed a pragmatic approach and has evolved its view on a case-by-case basis. India has advocated the policy of non-enmeshment in sectarian conflicts. Broadly, India has followed hands-off approach of not interfering in internal transition. As some countries have slipped into civil wars post-Arab Spring, one priority that has emerged in the Indian foreign policy is the protection of Indian expats in this region. A bigger concern for India has been to protect the sea-lanes of communication to sustain oil supplies. Our policy is that as the Arab Spring favours democracy and has a secular outlook, India favours the changes brought about by it in the Arab World.

## LIBYAN CRISIS AND LIMITS ON INDIA'S WEST ASIA POLICY

In 2011, the Arab Spring started against the Muammar Gaddafi regime in Libya who refused to leave the Libyan scene. Libya then subsequently saw a NATO intervention, which led to a forced removal of Gaddafi. Libya became the first state that underwent civil war after the Arab Spring.



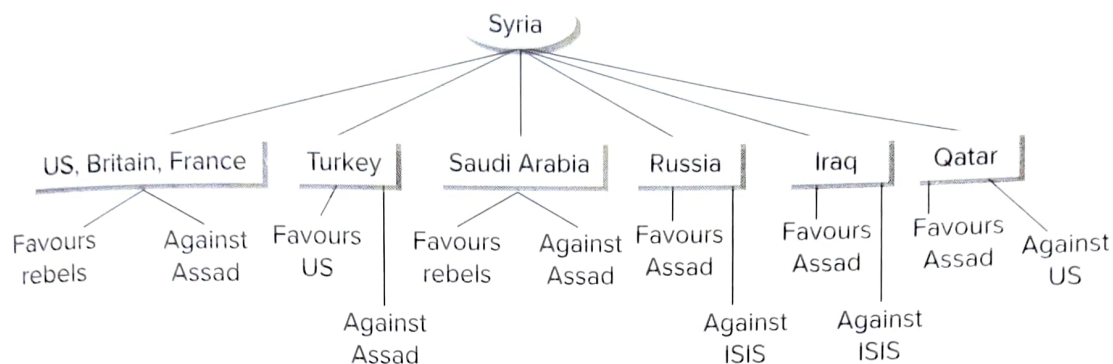
After Gaddafi, Libya has fragmented into multiple groups all of who assert power today. The regime of Gaddafi at least had kept all factions under control but post-Gaddafi, Libya has slipped into a civil war and the crisis in Libya still continues. The conflict in Libya is about wealth and power. After the removal of Gaddafi, the society, which has got fragmented, has seen the rise of local militias. The militias are controlled by tribes, which have been asserting dominance over resources. In 2012, the General National Congress was elected but each major city still has a dominant militia. The GNC elected in 2012 had to give power to House of Representatives in 2014, which has not happened till 2022. The Arab Spring has seen protests against Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen and also against the ruler in Bahrain. In Morocco, King Mohammed VI has agreed to transition. Elections have happened and people want the monarchy to stay in Morocco as well as in Jordan.

## SYRIAN CRISIS AND LIMITS ON INDIA'S WEST ASIA POLICY

The Arab Spring created protest even in Syria but Assad refused to leave the scene. This has plunged Syria into a situation of civil war as the opposition favours his removal. This issue of the Syrian conflict has become all the more complex



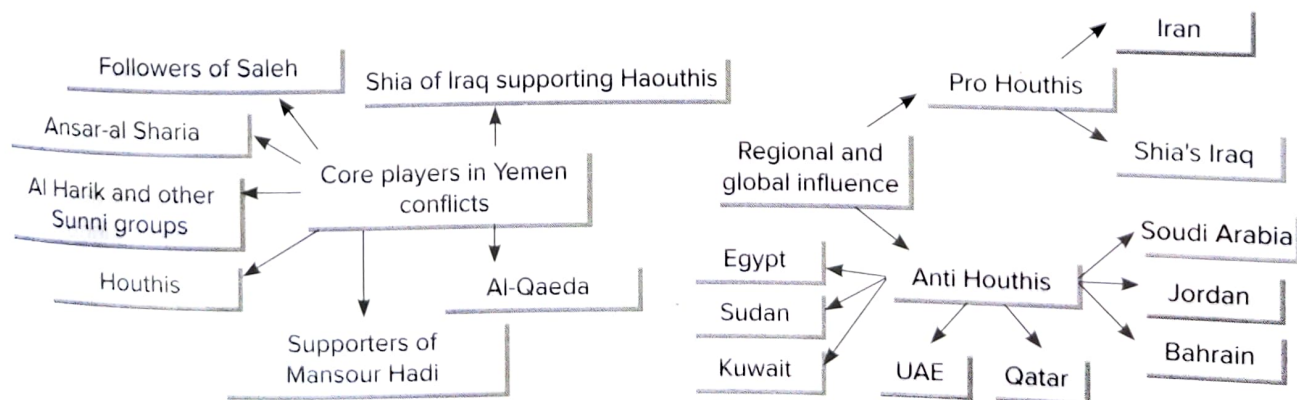
with foreign participation. Russia supports Syria as Russian Black Sea bases are not very far away from Syria and Syria is an important nation in Russia's West Asia Policy. The civil war in Syria has caused enormous damage to its civilian population, which has led to the population to seek refugee outside Syria. The year of 2015 saw colossal refugee crises when people began to leave Syria for Germany, Greece, Sweden and Turkey.



## THE CRISIS IN YEMEN AND LIMITS ON INDIA'S WEST ASIA POLICY

Yemen is an Islamic nation with 65% Sunni and 35% Shia population. It is a fertile territory that also receives adequate rainfall due to its mountainous terrain. The population of Yemen is relatively poor as the natural resources of Yemen are declining. Historically, Yemen had a Zaydi Mutawakkilite kingdom from 1918 to 1962, which ended with the reign of Muhammad al-Badr. The conflict in Yemen is primarily between Houthis and Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. Houthis belonged to a Shia sect called Zaydis and were organised as the Jund Ansar Allah.

The problem in Yemen began for the first time in 2004 when Hussein Badr-al-Houthi began an uprising against the Ali Abdullah Saleh government in Yemen. The root cause of the uprising was the demand by Houthi for more autonomy with an aim to protect Houthi Shias from cultural invasion by Sunni Muslims. This conflict lasted from 2004 to 2010. In 2011, as the Arab Spring gripped the entire Arab World, the Houthis participated against the Saleh government, which was being led by Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi as a de facto head. In 2012, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi came to power. In February 2014, National Dialogue conference happened in Yemen. Houthis also participated in the conference. The conference spoke about dividing Yemen into a federation of six regions. The Houthis opposed the idea, saying that with the formation of such a federation, violence would begin all over again. Houthis, being Shias, receive support from Iran and at present, control Northern Yemen and the capital Sana. In the southern part of Yemen, since 2007, there has been a secessionist movement called al-Hirak or South Yemen movement, which also poses threat to Yemen's sovereignty. In the southeast part of Yemen, Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula and Ansar-al-Sharia are active as Sunni extremists and they are supported by Saudi Arabia. The conflict, at the regional level, can be perceived through the prism of the Shia-Sunni axis, with groups supported by both Iran and Saudi Arabia.



## ABRAHAM ACCORDS AND THEIR STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN WEST ASIA

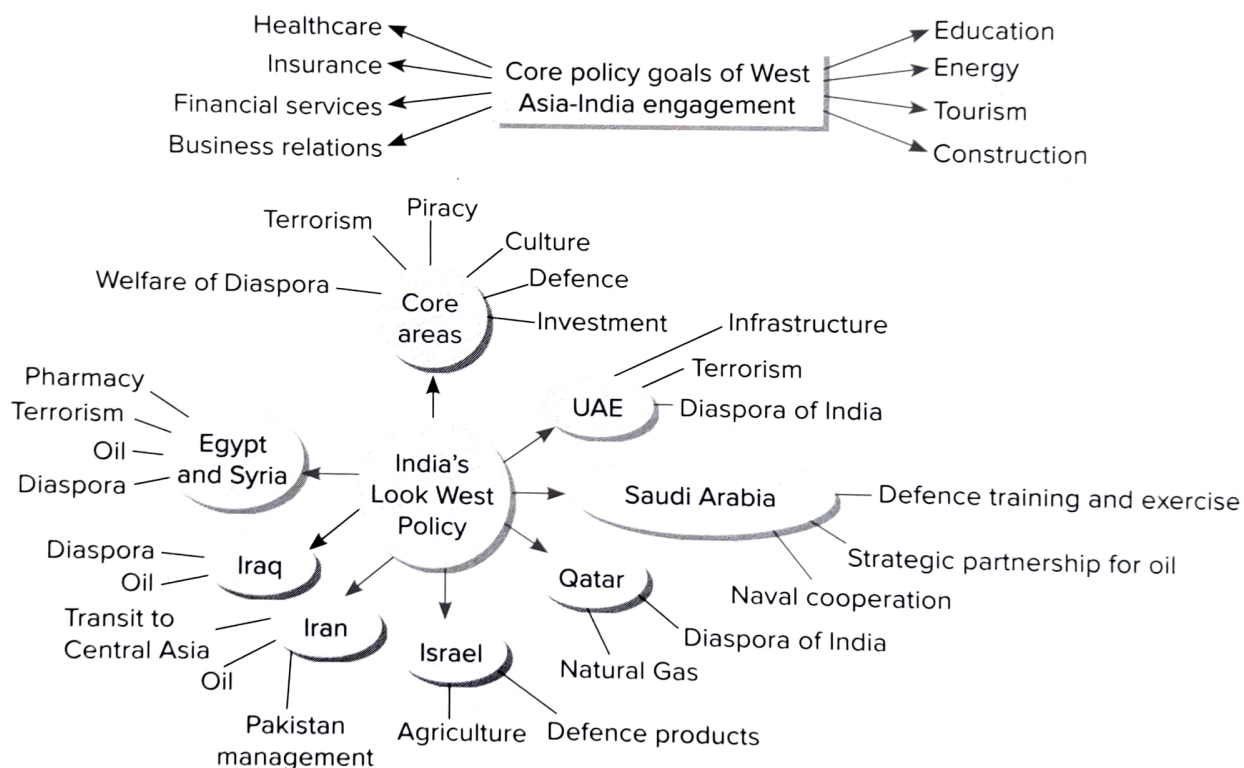
### Why did the Abraham Accords Fail?

The Abraham Accords did not enjoy popular support. The state of Israel is still seen as an outsider by the people of the Arab states and will remain so till Israel settles the issues with Palestinians peacefully.

Abraham Accords were signed between the US, Israel and a consortium of Arab states led by UAE to normalise diplomatic relations. The signing of the accords is significant as the accords have removed a strategic obstacle for India which is of a trapeze wire delicate balancing act that India often had to play between the Arab Gulf and Israel for decades. This status quo in Middle East is now witnessing a change with Israel inaugurating its first diplomatic mission in Abu Dhabi and launching direct flights, encouraging business and tourism. New Delhi has welcomed the accords, because they offer peace and stability in the region. India's strategic play in West Asia is now more reflective of its emerging economic growth, and by association, an increasingly important place in the global order after pandemic. From the UN Security Council to the Indo-Pacific, New Delhi is now more

assertive, diplomatically and militarily in West Asia, in its posturing and has shed the cloaks of its foreign and strategic policies are now being conducted from a stage balanced on a fence. India now stands to gain by working with the West Asian QUAD of India, Israel, UAE and the US.

### MIND MAP







# 5

CHAPTER

## India's Relationship with Saudi Arabia and Iran: The Doctrine of Sunni-Shia Balancing

### FOUNDATION OF INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SAUDI ARABIA

India and Saudi Arabia established diplomatic relations in 1948. However, the relations with Saudi Arabia have not been very smooth during the Cold War. In the aftermath of independence, India and Pakistan had a war in 1948. Pakistan was able to garner Saudi support owing to its religious foundation and its emergence as an Islamic state. In 1953, Saudi king Al-Saud visited Pakistan and supported Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. However, Saudi-Pakistan relations deteriorated when, in 1955, Pakistan joined the US alliance brokered by the Central Treaty Organisation or the Baghdad pact. Saudi then used this opportunity to cultivate relations with India. In 1955, Saudi Prince Faisal visited India and later, King Saud also visited India. In 1956, Nehru paid a state visit to Saudi Arabia. Again, this bonhomie was not long lasting as in 1957, Saudi itself announced a pro-west alliance. Saudi Arabia used its alliance with the US to assert hegemony in the region. During the early decades of the Cold War, Egypt had propounded an idea of Pan-Arabism and Arab unity. However, Saudi began to weaken the influence of Egypt and Syria in the Middle East by using Pan-Islamism as a tool. As India was pro-Egypt, a weaker Egypt also meant weaker Indian influence in the Middle East. As Saudi succeeded in tilting the balance of power of the Middle East in its favour, it gave Pakistan an increased leverage to side with Saudi Arabia. In 1965, in the Indo-Pak war, Saudi supported Pakistan as Egypt supported India. Even in the 1971 war with Pakistan, the Saudis continued to support Pakistan. Saudi even refused to give diplomatic recognition to Bangladesh after its creation in 1971. After the 1973 oil embargo, as more money flowed into Saudi Arabia, it gave Saudi the option to undertake aggressive arms race with others. However, three events in late 1970s and 1980s drastically changed the landscape of the Middle East. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 and the beginning of Iran-Iraq war in 1980 were defining moments of the time. In the recent times, the US are no longer a reliable supporter of Saudi as it has explored Shale gas as an alternative to oil. This has reduced the strategic significance of Saudi in the thought of the US. To make the matters more complicated, Saudi is occupied in fighting its arch-rival Iran. Turkey supports Iran by propping up Sunni radicals that threaten the House of Saud. All these geopolitical events have compelled Saudi to undertake massive social and economic transformation with Asia. This brings India into the strategic calculus of Saudi.

#### Kashmir irritant between India and Saudi Arabia

Pakistan was successful in mobilising the support of Saudi Arabia for Kashmir. They convinced Saudi Arabia that Kashmir being a Muslim province, under 'illegal occupation' of India, is detrimental to Muslims in general and Islam in particular. The Saudis during the Cold War period were embraced in the American umbrella and they bought this argument and went on to criticise India. They insisted that Kashmir issue be resolved through UN resolutions, plebiscite and even favoured third-party interventions. All these became major irritants between India and Saudi Arabia during Cold War.

### JASWANT SINGH FACTOR IN INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

When the Cold War ended, Saudi Arabia wanted to re-look at the relations with other nations and India became a priority country. The prime importance attached to India was due to the presence of Indian nationals in the kingdom and a huge Indian workforce assisting the Saudi government. In January 2011, the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh,

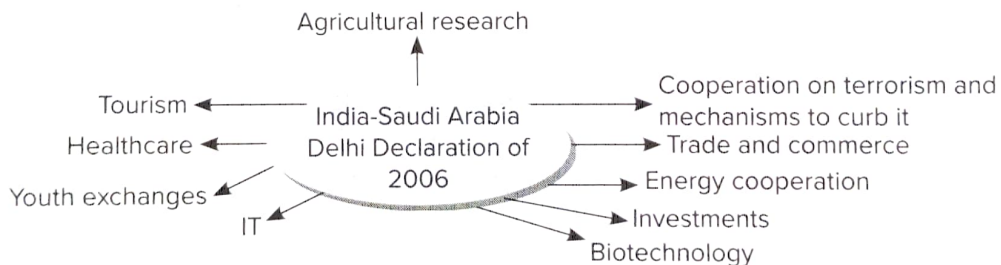
paid a visit to Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal made a press statement at the end of the meeting where the issue of Kashmir was spoken about. There was no reference by the Prince on plebiscite, third-party mediation and UN resolutions. The Saudi kingdom emphasised that Kashmir is a bilateral issue and must be resolved by India and Pakistan bilaterally. The kingdom went further to announce in the statement that Saudi Arabia feels that India is a valuable partner and will not view its ties with India through prism of a third country. Thus, in response to the visit of Jaswant Singh, the Saudis decided to not just de-hyphenate India and Pakistan but also opened up a new chapter in the relationship where no third-country influence would be a deciding factor of bilateral relationship.

## PRACTICING DIPLOMATIC POLICY OF DE-HYPHENATION OF INDIA–PAKISTAN

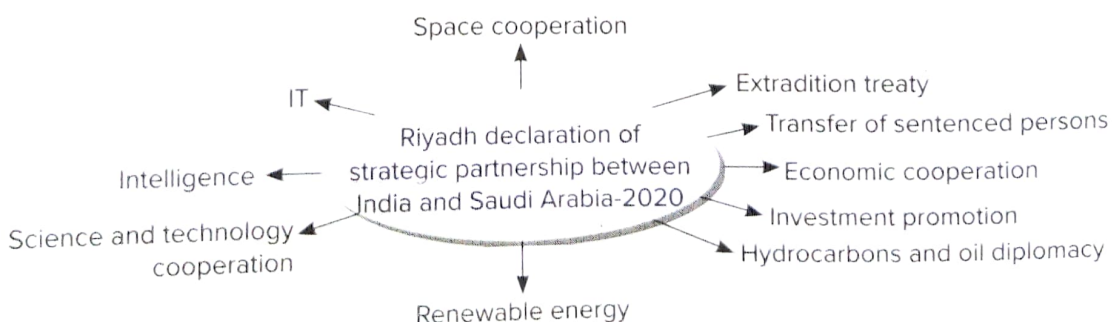
In the recent times, an important point mentioned in the joint statement between India and Saudi Arabia was that Saudi policy on Chinese BRI syncs with India's position on the BRI. The statement says that regional connectivity projects should respect international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. A peculiar feature of the visit of Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) to India in 2019 was that not only MBS de-hyphenated India and Pakistan, but also condemned Pulwama attack and decided to increase all possible pressure (through intelligence sharing with India) on countries that offer support to terrorism (an indirect reference to Pakistan). Saudi has shown a 'positive understanding' on India's abrogation of Article 370, despite Malaysia and Turkey being negative. As Saudi Arabia is trying to diversify its economy, India sees this as a positive attempt as India feels that if Saudi focuses more on economy and eventually returns to moderate Islam, then it will have a positive impact on global Muslim community and weaken ideological moorings of radical Wahhabi Islam, which is currently inflaming Kashmir valley.

## STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SAUDI ARABIA FOR INDIA

In 2006, King Abdullah visited India. This visit marked a new chapter in Saudi Arabian foreign policy as Saudi decided to now strengthen its relations beyond the US. In the same year, King Abdullah was made the Chief Guest of the Republic Day parade celebrations. India and Saudi Arabia, in 2006, concluded the Delhi Declaration. This was the first ever-comprehensive document bilaterally signed to envisage a deep relationship between the two states. The components are explained below.



As the Delhi Declaration of 2006 opened up the cooperation, Indian PM Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Riyadh in 2010. The aim of the visit was to build cooperation on a platform beyond the Delhi Declaration. During PM's visit to Riyadh, not only did he conclude the Riyadh Declaration, but also the partnership was now taken to the level of strategic partnership. The components are explained below.





In 2019, a Strategic Partnership Council has been established between Indian PM and Saudi Crown directly where the two head of the states engage and set agendas for political, economic, security and socio-cultural matters. Under the Council, multiple working groups are created to ensure that matters are dealt with in an institutionalised manner.

## INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT FOR COOPERATION IN OIL, GAS, DEFENCE AND CIVIL AVIATION BETWEEN INDIA-SAUDI ARABIA

In 2019, during the visit of Indian PM to Saudi, both sides have signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement for Cooperation in Oil, Gas, Defence and Civil Aviation. India has become the fourth country after Germany, Russia and Japan to have such an agreement. India has also been an active participant in the Saudi-led Future Investment Initiative (an initiative of Mohammed bin Salman), also known as Davos of the Desert, where India pitched for five trends in India for the global investors to remit. They include infrastructure, HRD, innovation, environment and business friendly governance.

## NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY BETWEEN INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA

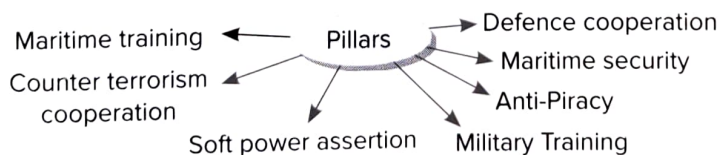
Because of the recent global downturn, the oil prices have fallen and as a result, Saudi deficits are necessitating diversification and movement beyond oil. This has created opportunities for India to strengthen its strategic presence and outreach in Saudi. A new dimension of India–Saudi Arabia relation that has emerged is cooperation in science and technology. Saudi Arabia has announced the setting of 22 nuclear reactors by 2023 as a priority goal. India has decided to assist Saudi Arabia in manpower training, thorium supply, nuclear research and nuclear waste management. The strategic relations, which till date were oil based, are set to diversify and are likely to have a nuclear component.

## STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN DIASPORA IN SAUDI ARABIA

There is a 2.6 million strong Indian diaspora in Saudi Arabia. Wherever the Indian PM has travelled in recent times, he has made sure to address a mega gathering of the Indian diaspora, be it in a stadium in the UAE or massive crowds in the USA and Australia. However, no such thing was visible in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Arabian law prohibits any assembly of people for political reasons. It is this point of the Saudi law that compelled the PM to visit and address the diaspora at the residential complex in 2016. This also gave an opportunity to the diaspora to have a much closer touch with their leader and helped establish a different level of connect. To assist the Indian diaspora, in 2020, Saudi Arabia decided to launch RuPay cards for payments. Saudi Arabia has emerged as the third state after UAE and Bahrain to do so.

## STRATEGIC AND DEFENCE DIPLOMACY BETWEEN INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA

India has evolved security interaction through the security engagement with West Asia having the following pillars:



The two are cooperating in defence training and defence exchanges as the fourth Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation happened in 2019 where they decided to collaborate for joint naval exercise and joint production of naval spare parts and maritime security.

## COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA

In 2020, India and Saudi Arabia established a 'Comprehensive Security Dialogue', in which National Security Advisors of the two states participated. In that dialogue, a Joint Working Group Terrorism had also been established.

## **OIL AND ENERGY DIPLOMACY BETWEEN INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA**

Saudi Arabia, as part of its Vision 2030 (where Saudi Arabia aims to diversify from oil into manufacturing, technology and services; with an objective to link Saudi Arabia to global value chains and prepare Saudi women and men for the 21st century workplace), has identified India as one of the eight strategic partners. It has identified four areas to deepen its partnership with India. These include security, trade, investment and culture. India is one of the second largest buyers of oil from Saudi Arabia, after the first being Iraq. MBS decided to invest USD 100 billion in India and a Saudi firm Aramco (in partnership with Abu Dhabi National Oil Company) will invest in the Ratnagiri refinery and other petrochemical projects. Now, the question arises why is Saudi Arabia undertaking these investments in India? The reason is that Saudi Arabia is building a refinery in Gwadar, which was being built also to help China seek oil from the refinery. But, as per recent reports, China is increasing its shale oil output from Xinjiang and also importing shale from Kazakhstan. This is likely to make the refinery at Gwadar less attractive, thus Saudi Arabia is investing in India. This does not mean that Pakistan will lose relevance in Saudi Arabian strategic thought. Saudi Arabia will continue to use Pakistan to bleed Iran (through Jaish al-Adl terrorist group, supported by Saudi Arabia, based in Pakistan that attacks Iran). Bringing Saudi Arabian investment in our western periphery can deter Pakistan to launch any offensive against India. This is so because they will never attack any strategic location of India where there is Saudi Arabian investment. In 2020, Saudi Aramco decided to partner in strategic petroleum reserve with India and would setup a reserve in Karnataka, under the India–Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council.

## **PAKISTAN FACTOR IN INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS**

A scholar named Harsh V. Pant asserts that when the Indian PM visited Saudi Arabia in 2016, the visit did not succeed in de-hyphenation (to convince Saudi Arabia to act tough on Pakistan and stop the export of terrorism). He asserts that although the joint statement did assert concerns over rising terrorism and offered condemnation, it felt short to name Pakistan. In 2019, Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) visited Pakistan and appreciated Pakistani role in the fight against terrorism.

## **HURDLES IN OIL AND ENERGY DIPLOMACY AND APPROACH OF GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL**

As far as the region is concerned, unfortunately, due to the sectarian divide in the Middle East, evolving a consensus on regional security has become difficult. Iran prefers the idea of bilateral cooperation with its suppliers for guaranteeing regional security, though it does not have any successful model worth emulating. Within the GCC nations, there is no consensus. The GCC prefers the international community's engagement that is not agreeable to Iran, which wants to evolve regional security interactions in the region keeping its own national interests in mind. Also, in the recent times, due to conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia, manifesting attacks on oil tankers, has added up as a new headache for India, which is struggling to ensure stable supplies of oil from the region. The killing of Qasem Soleimani in 2020, the chief of Quds force of Iran has aggravated tensions in the region and has put the region on the brink of a new Cold War.

## **HURDLES IN DIASPORA MANAGEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA**

Saudi Arabia has announced labour reforms and has committed to establish a unified standard contract for domestic workers. For female domestic workers, under contract, the Saudi employers have to deposit 2500 US dollars in the Indian embassy, which is refundable to the employer if there is no issue of abuse or non-payment of salary. There is a new minimum wage of 1500 SR to be paid to the workers. In 2016, the Indian PM gave approval to the MOU on labour cooperation signed one during his visit for the necessary changes and the new format of labour categorisation.

## **DIPLOMATIC DIMENSIONS OF FUTURE COOPERATION WITH SAUDI ARABIA**

The two countries identified solar power and satellite technology as new areas of cooperation for the future. Economically, India can offer Saudi Arabia software and human capital for their economic transformation, thereby creating a new regional geopolitical template of cooperation as both sides know that this entente cordiale is not only positive for their bilateral



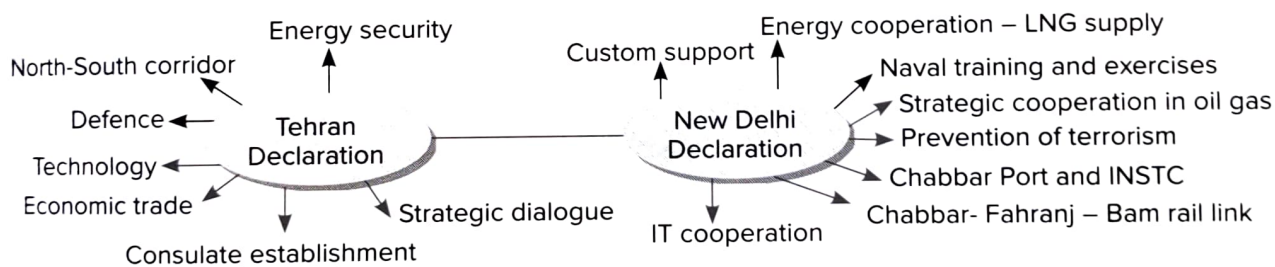
potential but also enables the two to widen their geostrategic options. Riyadh wants to use Pakistan as a valuable asset to counter growing influence of Iran from Syria to Yemen.

## HISTORICAL DIMENSION OF INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN

The relations between India and Iran began in 1950 when they signed a treaty of Friendship and Perpetual Peace. However, Iran became a part of the US alliance via the Baghdad pact in 1954 and the Cold War separated the budding allies. During the Cold War, Iran due to its affiliation to CENTO also developed proximity with Pakistan. During the 1965 and 1971 war, Iran provided military assistance to Pakistan. In 1979, there was an Iranian revolution and this brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power and he established the theocratic Islamic Republic of Iran. Post-1979, India and Iran began to establish proximity. During the Iran–Iraq war, which began in 1980 and lasted till 1988, India remained neutral and continued economic diplomacy for oil imports. In 1983, they established an India–Iran Joint Commission (JC). The aim of the JC was to promote economic cooperation and organise foreign minister level meets. In the 1980s and 1990s, the dialogue on trade and economy continued. In 1993, Narasimha Rao visited Tehran while in 1995, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani visited India. In 2001, Vajpayee and Khatami signed the Tehran Declaration while, in 2003, Khatami, on his visit to India, signed the New Delhi Declaration.

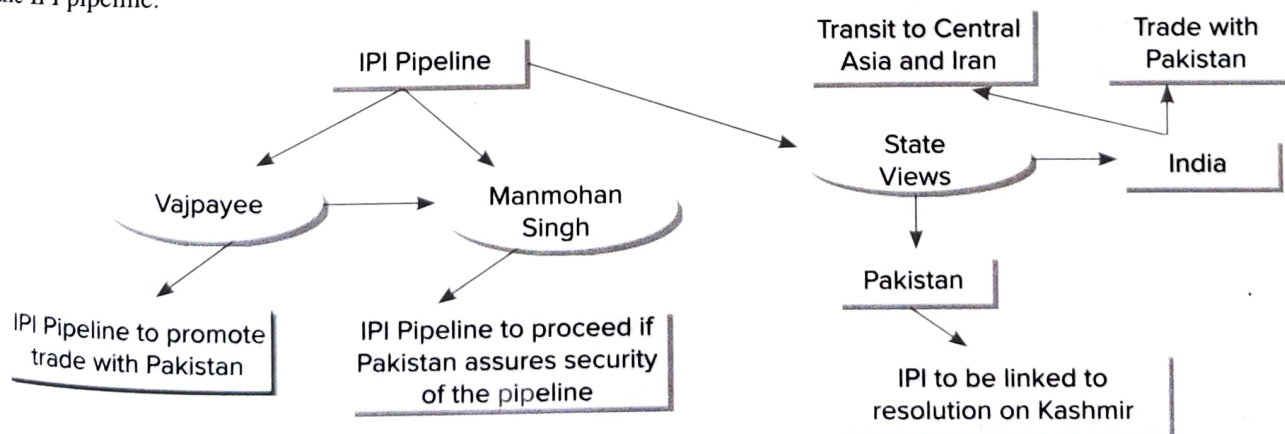
## STRATEGIC DIMENSION OF INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN

The relation dipped due to the nuclear programme of Iran in 2005–06. In 2005, India and Iran had signed an agreement to supply 5 million tonnes of LNG per year from 2009 and this 32-billion-dollar deal got affected due to nuclear sanctions. In 2008, Ahmadinejad, on a visit to Pakistan and Sri Lanka, halted in India for refuelling and this stopover was transformed into a state visit to patch up relations. During the US–Iran confrontation, India maintained that Iran had the right to have its own nuclear programme. India and Iran's strategic diplomacy is based on the Tehran Declaration and the New Delhi Declaration. The following are the components of the two countries.



## IRAN–PAKISTAN–INDIA PIPELINE DIPLOMACY TEMPLATE

The IPI (Iran–Pakistan–India) pipeline was conceived by a Pakistani engineer Malik Aftab Ahmed Khan in mid-1950. In 1989, R. K. Pachauri conceptualised the project. Different Prime Ministers in India have followed different approaches to the IPI pipeline.



Because of the US sanctions on Iran, India since 2008 has abandoned the pipeline. However, in 2017, a Parliamentary panel in India has recommended that India should revive the work on the IPI pipeline. The panel has asserted that India can import 60 million standard cubic meters per day from South Pars Gas field from Iran to Pakistan and India. India fears the safety of IPI pipeline passing through Pakistan and India favours that Iran takes the responsibility for the security of the pipeline.

## **KASHMIR ISSUE AS AN IRRITANT BETWEEN INDIA AND IRAN**

On 26th June 2017, during the Eid sermon, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini equated conflict in Kashmir at par with one in Yemen and Bahrain. In 2019, when India abrogated Article 370, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini advocated that India should protect Muslim interests. It is not the first time Iran has done this as it had made similar statements in 2010 also. Since 1979, Iran and Saudi Arabia have been engaged in a proxy war where both have used religion as a tool to pursue power. India has tried to balance Iran and Saudi Arabia but Iran does not appreciate India's tilt towards Saudi Arabia and the recent utterance of Khomeini must be seen in that context. Iran through the statements has asserted that it is a crucial player in the Islamic world and India cannot ignore Iran. Though India has ignored the provocation by Ayatollah on Kashmir, India needs to rework its economic engagement with Rouhani. For India, Iran remains a strategic economic partner to cooperate in Chabahar Port/International North South Transit Corridor.

## **ENERGY AND OIL DIPLOMACY BETWEEN INDIA AND IRAN**

India has been buying oil from Iran since the Cold War time. Russian Gazprom and Chinese National Petroleum Corporation have emerged as new potential players. Iran has been visibly upset with India, which allied with the US during the sanction period and reduced oil imports from Iran. As per the Indian policy, today only Indian carriers can import oil from foreign countries. India is going to amend the policy to allow a foreign shipping container firm to import oil. India, at the energy security level, is making a shift to gas resources and in the process is planning to hire very large container carriers (VLCC) from Japan to import gas from Australia, Russia, Iran and Mozambique. Iran is an irreplaceable supply partner for gas. India has also initiated a diplomatic dialogue with Iran to discuss the possibility of Iran–Oman–India pipeline in the future. India uses UCO Bank to make payments to Iran. This is so because UCO Bank has the least exposure to the US and this makes it less vulnerable to US CAATSA sanctions.

## **STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF CHABAHAR PORT FOR INDIA AND PORT DIPLOMACY**

Chabahar is Iran's only oceanic port and has to separate ports of Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti with five berths. Chabahar port is a part of the regional economic strategy of India. Since the end of the Cold War, Chabahar port is a component of India's grand strategy. After 1991, the core objective of Indian foreign policy was to seek foreign support for economic development of India, engage with middle and great powers, normalise India's engagement in the neighbourhood and raise India's profile in external neighbourhood (this is the point where Iran's Chabahar port comes into play) and finally to improve India's international standing. The idea of Chabahar port came up in 2003 when Iranian President Khatami visited India and a deal was signed between the two states. For India, Chabahar port remains the most important tool that can alter the hostile regional geography that India has inherited post-partition of India and Pakistan. As Pakistan continued to deny India overland transit access to Central Asia and Afghanistan, India decided to make a move with Iran. The significance of the Chabahar port for India has gained higher importance after the Chinese announced the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor under the Belt and Road initiative. Chabahar port allows India to bypass the geographical limitations imposed by the partition. In 2016, India–Afghanistan–Iran concluded the trilateral Transit and Transport Corridor Treaty. Under this treaty, India has committed 500 million dollars to develop the Chabahar port and establish railway line infrastructure. The treaty will allow India to access Central Asia and will give a boost to the idea of regional connectivity. Iran also favours India's inclusion into the Ashgabat Agreement. Under the Ashgabat Agreement (concluded in 2016 between Iran, Turkmenistan, Oman and Uzbekistan), the Persian Gulf will be connected to Central Asia through a direct corridor. Chabahar port for India is not just about access to energy markets of Central Asia but also access to fast growing economies of the Eurasian region and a gambit against history. India may witness some challenges in the



endeavour of developing the Chabahar port. Firstly, India has to convince private players to use Iran as a transit route to reach Central Asia than China, which is the presently used route. Secondly, to access the future markets of Central Asia and Eurasian region, Indian exports need to become more competitive. In 2016, India decided to refurbish Shahid Beheshti and reconstruct a 600 m long container handling facility. The 2016 agreement allows India Ports Global (a joint venture of JNPT and Kandla Port trust) to develop two berths. India is also constructing a railway line to connect Chabahar and Zahedan and on Iran-Afghan border. This helped India to bypass Helmand province of Afghanistan that is a hot bed of Taliban. If berths are developed then the trading capacity rises from 2.5 million tonnes to 8 million tonnes and will give India access to Eurasia and Afghanistan. To develop Chabahar India Ports Global has got 500 million dollars from India. The pioneers in the construction are Swiss firm Liebherr and Finland's Konecranes. Because of Trump's withdrawal from JCPOA, India Ports Global has not been able to proceed to take help. In 2016, a deadline of 18 months was set up but the uncertainty prevails even today. James M. Dorsey is of the view that the USA seems to work with Saudi Arabia and UAE to destabilise Iran and check Qatar and this would affect Chabahar and India. However, in February 2018, a part of the Chabahar became operational. In 2020, the US gave India a 'written' assurance that it would seek support of global banks to mobilise money to support India for the development of the port.

### **FARZAD-B OIL FIELD IRRITANT BETWEEN INDIA AND IRAN**

In 2008, ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) discovered gas in Farzad-B offshore field. Farzad-B is the biggest gas discovery in Iran. To secure rights over Farzad-B, IOC and OIL consortium have been established. India sought preferential treatment in development rights of Farzad-B as it explored and gas found as per exploration agreement of 2012. Iran was not keen to give India any preference. Iran was not happy with India supporting the US during sanctions against Iran. After 2015 Lausanne framework, India offered 6 billion dollars for developing the gas field and 5 billion dollars for LNG export terminal. Post sanction removal, Chinese National Petroleum Corporation and Russian Rosneft Gazprom have offered interest in Farzad-B. India has cut oil imports from Iran since 2017 due to not getting preferential access but no effect happened on Iran. Iran says that India should sell gas from Farzad-B it discovered at current international rates which India feels is low as global demand is not high as there is enough supply in the market. India asserts that gas exploration at Farzad-B is tough as gas is impure and extracted gas has to be cleaned which increases the cost and selling this gas after incurring additional cost at current international prices will lead to a loss to India. The Consortium of India feels that it may affect the returns to investors of the Consortium this way. Energy expert Deepak Mahorkar says that India needs Iranian gas as Iran being geographically close to India and India running short of gas resource. Iran had asserted that India explored gas, process it and setup an LNG terminal to sell and export it. India committed 11 billion dollars investment for it. Iran has now asserted that India's Consortium can explore the gas and deliver it to an offshore field at a landfall point in the gulf island. India need not to process the gas of impurities such as sulphur or do marketing as both will be done by Iran. This has reduced the overall cost for India as India will not establish an LNG terminal, thereby India will save 5 million dollars and also save money in processing impurities. India needs to establish a development facility for exploring gas that will not cost 6 billion dollars as planned earlier, but around 4 billion dollars. The rate of return Iran is offering for delivery conditions could be just around 5% to 6%.

### **THE INSTEX METHOD—INDIA'S OIL PAYMENT MECHANISM IN THE ERA OF SANCTIONS ON IRAN**

India could be helped by the alternative trade system that the European Union has been putting together after the US sanctions prevented countries from using a dollar-led SWIFT to trade with Iran. European Union, which is still committed to the nuclear deal signed in 2015, attempts to mollify an enraged Iran resulted in the creation of a system, INSTEX, which is nothing but a complicated barter system that side steps the dollar route. European countries that began its usage in July 2019 have confined it to humanitarian goods only so that they do not antagonise Washington. Iranian authorities claim that goods worth \$14 billion have been lined up for trading, which excludes oil. Many countries including India that want to disengage from the US controlled trading order also want to explore INSTEX. Washington sees in INSTEX beginning of a revolt of against its hegemony of the financial world order and is keen to smother it.



## ORIGIN OF IRANIAN NUCLEAR ISSUE

In 1953, the US president Eisenhower gave a speech at the UN General Assembly entitled 'Atoms for Peace' (AFP). The US was determined to use atomic technology for peaceful purposes within and amongst developing countries for civilian nuclear programmes. The recipient states were to use the nuclear technology only for civilian and peaceful purposes. The Iranian Nuclear programme (INP) began in 1957 when Mohammad Reza Shah of Iran entered into an agreement to cooperate on civilian use of atomic energy. In 1959, in the University of Tehran, the Iranian Shah established the Tehran Nuclear Research Centre (TNRC) and initiated negotiations with the US under AFP for civilian nuclear support. In 1967, the US established a 5 megawatt nuclear reactor with highly enriched uranium fuel to fuel the reactor at the TNRC, which had the capacity to produce 600 grams of plutonium per year in the spent fuel. Akbar Etemad was the father of the INP. Under the AFP, Iranian scientists also got an opportunity to get trained in the US. In 1974, Iran created the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran to achieve the target of training manpower for 20 reactors in the next 20 years. Subsequently, in 1975, the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran and MIT entered into an agreement to train Iranian nuclear scientists. Things changed after the 1979 Iranian revolution. When the rule of the Shah came to an end in 1979, the US suspended all nuclear cooperation with Iran. Iran, on the other hand, continued to receive support from Russia, China and Abdul Qadeer Khan's nuclear arms bazaar. Initially, Ayatollah Khomeini reduced the intensity of the INP but the 1980 Iran–Iraq war brought about a rethinking in Iran about its nuclear programme. In 1983, Iran asked the IAEA to provide Iran assistance for technical help in setting up of a plant to provide uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>) required for enrichment. With assistance from France, Iran had established a home-grown facility to develop nuclear fuel at Esfahan Nuclear Technology Centre (ENTEC). The IAEA, under Article XI-A of its statute, was obligated to help a member state with such a project. In the same year, a team from the IAEA visited ENTEC to assist Iran with local expertise. Finally, due to the US pressure, however, the IAEA did not initiate any support. From 1976 to 2003, as per the subsidiary arrangements of the safeguards agreement between Iran and the IAEA, Iran had to report any new facility to the IAEA within 180 days along with providing information on any new location or outside facility. Since 1992, the subsidiary arrangement, which was part of the safeguard agreements, began to change but Iran was not a party to change in the safeguard agreements till 2003. The Iranian opposition party, Mujahedeen Khalq Organisation (MKO), revealed that Iran had established a secret facility at Natanz. As Iran was not a party to the changing safeguard agreements till 2003, by not declaring the Natanz facility within 180 days, it did not violate any legal obligation of the IAEA.

## NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY OF IRAN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SADABAD DECLARATION

Since 1992, the Board of Governors at the IAEA began to accept the subsidiary arrangement known as Modified Code 3.1 that required a member state to notify any decision to setup a new facility immediately. In 2003, Iran agreed to abide by the Modified Code 3.1, but as the US sanctions continued, Iran refused to finally ratify the Code. Iran began negotiations with the EU-3, that is, Britain, France and Germany. The talks led to the adoption of Sadabad Declaration between Iran, Britain, France and Germany, whereby Iran decided to suspend all uranium enrichment. This was followed in 2004 with the Paris agreement. Under this, it was agreed that Iran and EU-3 would look for a long-term agreement to ensure an INP for peaceful purpose. The Sadabad Declaration and the Paris Agreement failed, as Iran could not get a security guarantee for any attack on Iran. Iran said that it got a box of chocolates out of the deals, which was empty.

## THE JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION

Since 2006, Iran resumed enrichment at its facility in Natanz. The belligerent policy of the US on Iran gave rise to a hardliner in Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who became the next president. The refusal of Iran to ratify the Modified Code 3.1 led the US to send the Iranian dossier for sanctions to the UN Security Council. In 2009, Iran sent a letter to the IAEA declaring that it is constructing a second uranium enrichment facility at Fordo under the mountain. As the Iranian Majlis had not ratified the Modified Code 3.1, it was not bound to follow. Tensions between the US and Iran continued. In 2006, China, Russia and the US joined the group of EU-3, becoming the P-5+1. Germany was a key trading partner of Iran and its nuclear programme depended upon German products and services. German firms such as Siemens, Mercedes, Lurgi,



Krupp and Volkswagen were also heavily operational with Iran. The negotiations of P-5+1 did not yield any results due to the presence of the hardliner Ahmadinejad. In 2012, with the election of Hassan Rouhani, things began to progress further. The first success was achieved in 2013 as per the Geneva Accord, where a joint plan of action (JPOA) was achieved. It was further negotiated upon, leading to a final JPOA in June 2015. The 2013 Geneva deal acknowledged that Iran has to accept that it would not enrich uranium for a nuclear bomb. The deal accepted the fact that it is a step-by-step solution where actions by Iran in good faith shall gradually lead to a comprehensive solution, and would finally involve an integrated whole, where nothing would be agreed upon until everything would be agreed upon. Under the Geneva agreement, Iran was not to enrich uranium beyond 5%. Iran would make no advances of activities at facilities in Natanz, Arak and Fordo.

## THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAUSANNE FRAMEWORK

In 2015, under the Lausanne Framework joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA), Iran had agreed not to enrich uranium beyond 3–6%. It retains the right for a peaceful nuclear programme. Iran would cut centrifuges from 19,000 to 6,104, with 5,060 centrifuges for enrichment. This makes it tough for Iran to make a bomb. Iran would also reduce its stockpile from 10,000 kg to 300 kg, ensuring transparency in its peaceful use of nuclear technology. The IAEA will access all nuclear facilities of Iran and there will be gradual lifting of sanctions. Iran has to address the concerns of the IAEA related to possible military dimensions of its nuclear programme and has to redesign the heavy water facility at Arak and transform the Fordo facility into a physics research centre. The Middle Eastern states had a mixed response to this arrangement. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and the Lebanon's speaker Nabih Berri welcomed the deal, along with the Syrians. Saudi Arabia felt that the Iran deal allowed Iran to maintain a nuclear threshold and that the elimination of sanctions would economically revive Iran. A strong Iran will allow it to assert its hegemony over Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and Syria. Though Israel has criticised the deal, we must note that Israel has actually never witnessed any existential threat from Iran. It has, however, faced regional competition post-withdrawal of sanctions. For Israel, the real issue, therefore, is not the bomb but the regional balance of power. A nuclear Iran, even for civilian use, threatens the decade-old strategy of allowing Israel to be an unrivalled military power of the Middle East. Israel knows that allowing Iran to have a civilian nuclear facility means that Iran too shall have the flexibility to turn military in nature at a short notice. Such a situation would severely delimit the ability of Israel to be the only player in the Middle East to establish regional hegemony with 200-plus unmonitored nuclear warheads. For Saudi Arabia, the revival of the regional GCC to prepare for a long-term confrontation with Tehran is the only option. Iran had decided to follow the Chinese model. The idea is to get the sanctions removed and get rich and then use the wealth to establish Iran as a regional hegemony. Both Israel and Saudi Arabia fear the dominance of Iran stretching from Beirut, Damascus to Bagdad and Aden. This fear is disturbing the balance of power in the Middle East post the 2015 Nuclear Deal.

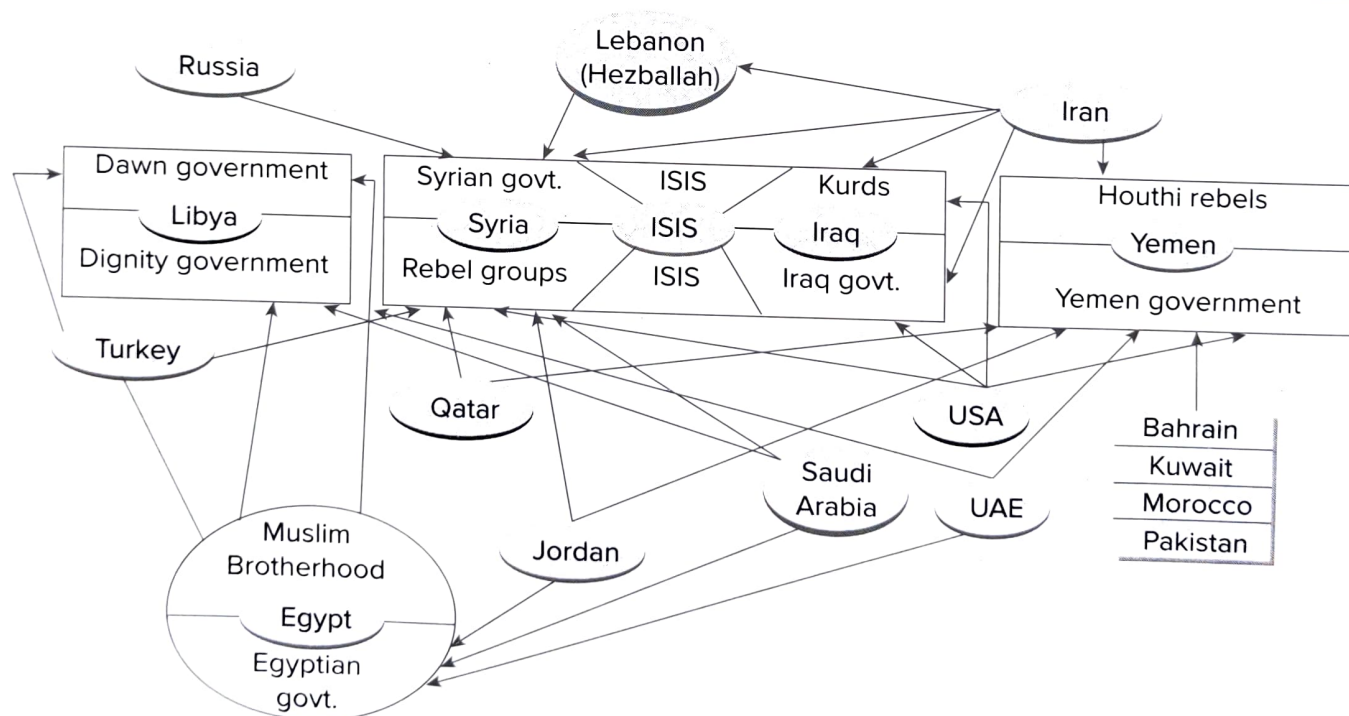
## NUCLEAR POLICY OF JOE BIDEN FOR IRAN

Trump said Iran was violating the spirit of the deal if not violating the deal in letter as it continued to work against the USA interests in Syria and Yemen and support to Hezbollah. Obama signed the deal on a balance of give and take relations where the idea was to curb nuclear ambitions of Iran but allow Iran a limited space to test ballistic and other missiles. Trump says that the nuclear deal does not restrict Iranian missile testing. This is despite the fact that JCPOA did not mention missile-testing point. The JCPOA mentions that Iran, which would reduce the centrifuges for enrichment from 19,000 to 5,060, will be for 10 years till 2025 but after 2025, these restrictions will be removed and limits on use of centrifuge ends in 2025 and limits on enrichment ends after 2030. So, Trump feels that by 2030 and afterwards Iran can go nuclear, thus the deal lacks comprehensiveness. Thus the US sanctions were re-imposed on Iran. Trump wanted a better deal where missile testing is curbed (ballistic missile testing) and Iran facilities are fully transparent for inspection. He wanted removal of 2025 and 2030 deadlines (also called sunset clause) and wants that sanction money that got released after the removal of sanctions on Iran is not used by Iran for proxy war in Yemen and Syria. Though Iran has asserted that its ballistic missiles cannot be used to carry nuclear warheads as Iran possesses no nuclear warheads and its ballistic missiles are only for conventional warfare, but this does not affect Trump who unilaterally withdrew from the deal. India has maintained that despite the US withdrawal from JCPOA, it will continue to engage with Iran for oil trade and development of Chabahar port for the purpose of transit development to Central Asia and Afghanistan and has maintained that Iran has a right to peaceful use of nuclear energy.

## INDIA'S STAND ON NUCLEAR ISSUE OF IRAN

At the international level, India at the time of signing its nuclear deal with the US in 2005, had to confront Iran. The US and Iran did not have a comfortable relationship as the US was deeply concerned about the Iranian nuclear programme. India was, on the other hand, reluctant to undermine its relations with Iran although it could not jeopardise a growing strategic partnership that had begun with the US in favour of Iran. India voted against Iran in 2006 at the IAEA voting. India clarified that when India had conducted a nuclear test in 1998, Iran had favoured a UNSC resolution asking India to put a cap on its nuclear capabilities and had urged India to sign the NPT and the CTBT. There are many things about Iran, which caused discomfiture to India. India, however, did not turn aggressive towards Iran and maintained that Iran was a great friend to India, while pushing for resolving the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomacy. India used the IAEA and Iran's programme to highlight the role of A. Q. Khan and of Pakistan as a proliferator state. India sponsored the US/EU-favoured resolution, recommending Iran to be examined as a case by the IAEA. India clarified that its vote was to prevent vitality in the Middle East and had no relation with Indo-US cooperation. However, since 2015 Iran nuclear deal, India has consistently maintained that Iran has a right for a 'peaceful' nuclear programme and its enrichment should remain within the ambit of civilian use.

## MIND MAP







# 6

## CHAPTER

# The Israel–Palestine Conflict, India's Relationship with Israel and India's Palestine Policy

### JEWISH ZIONISM, INDIAN PERCEPTION OF ZIONISM AND PALESTINE PROBLEM

When the Industrial Revolution began in Europe, it also brought about the spirit of nationalism amongst the Europeans. The British and the French emerged as two major European powers. After the unification of Germany by Bismarck, even Germany emerged as a strong power. This period of nationalism in Europe also was coupled with a period of colonisation. The British and the French resented the rise of Germany, as they perceived it as a serious competitor. As the World War I broke out, in 1916, the British and the French secretly signed the Sykes–Picot Agreement. Also known as the Asia Minor Agreement, the agreement had the British and the French decide the division of the Ottoman territory amongst themselves after the World War I. As the war ended, the British and French emerged victorious and Germany, Austria–Hungary and the Ottomans lost. The victorious powers of the World War I now decided to curb German ambitions and also divide the Ottoman territory. The establishment of the League of Nations after the World War I, the Mandate System and the Balfour Declaration gave effect to the ambitions of victorious powers. The British got the Mandate of Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Palestine while the French kept Syria and Lebanon as mandates. In order to curb German ambitions, the Treaty of Versailles was designed and signed in 1919. The wars also created a sense of nationalism in the Jews. The Jews were also inspired to have their own national home in the land they believed had been ‘promised’ to them by God. Theodore Herzl, in 1896, established the World Zionist Organization in Basel in Switzerland as a political movement to take Jews from Europe to Zion. (Zionism subsequently emerged, as a political movement of Jews; Zion or Jerusalem is where the temple mount is located in Palestine.) The basic idea of Theodore Herzl was that first, rich European Jews would go to Palestine and purchase lands and over a period of time; other Jews would go and settle in Palestine. Zionism, which emerged as a political movement, ended up being a movement to colonise Palestine. As the number of Jews in Palestine began to increase, the Arabs did not appreciate the move. After World War I, as the Mandate of Palestine had come under British control, the Arabs complained to the British about the rising number of Jews in Palestine. The British subsequently controlled the entry of the Jews into Palestine but did not impose a complete halt. This sowed the seeds of the Arab–Palestine disenchantment. During the inter-war period, Germany began to defy the Treaty of Versailles and also began to uproot the Jews in Germany. Hitler blamed Jews for the problems of Germany and in 1940 unleashed the horrific Holocaust as a ‘final solution to the Jewish Problem’. The mass massacre of Jews led to a wave of deep sympathy for the Jewish people all over the world. America also convinced its ally Britain to allow entry of one lakh Jews from Europe to Palestine and ease the entry restrictions. As a greater number of Jews began to enter Palestine, it upset the Arabs in Palestine. The situation in Palestine was very volatile.

### BIRTH OF ISRAEL, PARTITION OF PALESTINE AND INDIA'S POLICY

As the Jews and Arabs fought for the claim of Palestine, the UN was created as a successor to League of Nations on 15th May 1947. The British decided to hand over their Mandate of Palestine to the UN for deliberation. Subsequently, the UN

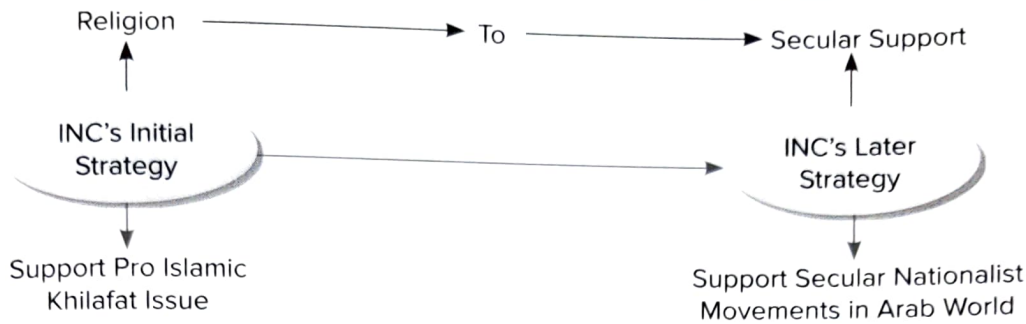


established United Nations Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP). The UNSCOP deliberated upon the Palestinian issue. During the UN debates, one group advocated that Arabs have been controlling Palestine but Jews also have a rightful claim on the territory and therefore, the territory of Palestine should be partitioned for Arab Palestinians and Jews, creating a plan which came to be known as the Majority Plan. On the other hand, the other group advocated that there should be a Federal Palestine and Jews can be accommodated in a unified Federal Palestine without the need to partition. Thus, this group created this plan, which came to be known as the Minority Plan. On 29th November 1947, the UN voted on both the plans. As per the vote, the Majority Plan received the maximum votes. The Palestine territory was to be partitioned and it was decided to establish an Arab Palestine and a Jewish Palestine while keeping the city of Jerusalem under international control. As per the decision of the UN, with support of the US, on 14th May 1948, the Jewish Palestine got established on the demarcated territory and Israel, as a state, was born.

## GANDHIAN AND NEHRUVIAN DOCTRINE OF PALESTINE

Gandhi initially developed his views about Jews and Zionism through his early interaction with Jews in South Africa, whereby he developed a substantial understanding of Jewish nationalism and their demand for a national home. Though he sympathised with the Jews for their horrific persecution in Germany at the hands of Hitler but he did not find much legitimacy in the demand of Jews to establish a national home. In the initial years after the World War I, Gandhi insisted that Palestine should not be a Jewish state but should remain under Muslim control. There were two reasons for Gandhi to espouse this view—first, Gandhi had kept domestic Indian Muslim community and their participation in the national movement in mind while forming his opinion; and second, Muslims had ruled Palestine for many centuries and it would have been a wrong strategy on the part of the British to accede to Zionist demand for the creation of a homeland in Palestine. He clarified that he believed Christians and Jews should freely go and worship in Palestine but should not acquire any sovereign jurisdiction over Palestine. But after the dissolution of Ottoman Empire in 1923, Gandhi argued that Zionists should not nurse territorial or political aspirations but rather, realise the Zionist ideas internally and spiritually. Gandhi also was very critical of Zionist cooperation with the British to achieve their demands of a national home as India was fighting British Imperialists. Indians began to perceive Zionist cooperation with British as Zionist intention to colonise Palestine. However, during this period, the Jewish Agency for Israel continued to work in close association with Gandhi and kept him abreast of the developments in Zionist political thought and goals. Nehru, who became the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of India in the immediate period after Indian independence, was also opposed to the idea of a national home for Jews but did develop affinity with socialist Jewish leaders. The first reference by Nehru to the issue of Palestine can be seen in 1933 when he wrote a letter on the issue from a prison to his daughter Indira. In the dialogue, Nehru appreciated Jewish achievements and their contribution to the improvement of living standards of Palestinians through modern industry. He did not, however, support the cause for a Jewish national home. He also did not appreciate the Zionist cooperation with the British for a colonisation of Palestine as he held forcible colonisation to be morally and ethically wrong. Nehru favoured the idea of a united Palestine and not one divided by religion. Nehru articulated his views on the Palestine in a different manner. For Nehru, the Palestine issue was a fight by the Arabs against British imperialists. Nehru inferred that the Jewish issue was a deliberate creation of the British—similar to the divide and rule tactic of British in India—where the British pitted Jews against Arabs in Palestine. Nehru was extremely moved by the plight of the Jews in Germany and Eastern Europe, and after witnessing their persecution first hand during his visit to Central Europe in 1938, he advocated asylum for Jews in India. In 1937, when the Peel Commission report recommended the partition of Palestine, the Indian National Congress (INC), in its 1938 Haripura session, condemned the partition scheme and extended sympathy to the Arab cause. The INC was sympathetic to Jewish persecution in Central Europe but did not favour any partition or support for a separate home for Jews. India played a key role in supporting anti-imperial struggles in Syria, Egypt and Palestine and expressed solidarity with their nationalist struggles while refraining from quoting any Jewish organisations. India abstained from developing relations with any Zionist movement as it intended to promote a secular outlook of nationalism.





The INC in India maintained a policy in favour of Arabs while the Muslim League had severely criticised the Zionist movement. The aim of the INC was to show solidarity with Palestine Arabs as also to reassure the Indian Muslims on which side they were. However, the INC and Muslim League differed in the sense that the INC was supportive to Arabs but was not hostile to Jews like the Muslim League was. The Muslim League vehemently opposed the creation of a Jewish Palestine and had also condemned the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

## INDIA'S ISRAEL POLICY AND UNITED NATIONS DIPLOMACY

In 1947, New Delhi organised a conference of the Asian Relations Organisation called the Asian Relations Conference (ARC). In the conference, both Arabs and Jewish delegations were invited. This was in sync with the earlier policy of the INC that had evolved support for Arab Palestinians, with conciliatory accommodation of Jews. A 10-member delegation of Jews headed by Samuel Hugo Bergmann, also known as the Hebrew University delegation, participated in the conference. Ironically, the Arab states declined to participate owing to Jewish invitation and this gave an opportunity to the Jews to present their case to India. During the ARC, the Jewish delegation again presented their idea of partitioning Palestine for accommodating Jews, which did not resonate well with the Indian leadership. Through the ARC, India also undertook a fine foreign policy manoeuvre by maintaining that Palestine belonged to Arabs, but simultaneously showing sympathy with the Jews. When the British placed the Palestinian issue before the UN General Assembly, Nehru appointed Asaf Ali as the Indian representative to the special session at the UN. Asaf Ali was instructed that he should not commit India to any situation that may affect India's relations with other nations but ensure that India would support the termination of the British Mandate of Palestine. Nehru asked Ali to play a cautious game as India wanted to support Arabs but not upset Jews as doing so would consequently affect India's relations with Western powers. The idea was to remain friendly to both the parties. The UNSCOP presented a final report in September 1947. The majority of members supported partition of Palestine but India, Iran and Yugoslavia advocated a Federal Palestine with both Arabs and Jews as a part of the territory. Thus, India continued to stick to its pre-partition policy of supporting Arabs and accommodating the Jews. As the partition plan won at the UNGA, it was clear that the partition of Palestine was inevitable. The question before India was what to do once a Jewish state in Palestine was born. On 14 May 1947, Israel as a state was born and both the US and the USSR recognised the existence of Israel. The task for Israel now was to seek diplomatic recognition from the world. It decided to seek the same from India too.

## INDIAN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEBATES ON PALESTINE QUESTION

On 17 May 1948, Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett, sent a letter to Nehru seeking diplomatic recognition of Israel from India. The Indian established decided not to make any hurried decision and adopted a wait-and-watch policy. In August 1948, H. V. Kamath enquired about the Indian position on Israel in the Constitution Assembly Debates where Nehru reiterated the wait-and-watch stance. There were two important reasons for India to adopt a wait-and-watch policy. The first was that after Israel got created, hostilities broke out in the region and the situation turned rapidly volatile with the outbreak of the 1st Arab–Israel War in 1948. In 1948, after the creation of Jewish Palestine or Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Jordan collectively attacked Israel. This led to the first Arab–Israel war in 1948. The UN immediately stepped in and by 1949, an Armistice Agreement was achieved. Secondly, the Indian Muslims had gone through the traumatic experience of partition and making a statement on Israel was not warranted at this stage. Further, during this period Pakistan began to establish proximity with Arabs to ignite the idea of Pan Islamism, which they could use against



India in Kashmir. However, during this period, Indian diplomats all over the world kept interacting with Israeli diplomat. Israel had become a reality in the international system and there was a growing pressure on India to recognise Israel. On 11th May 1949, UNGA decided to vote on the question of Israel being made the 54th member of UN. India voted positively on this question. When Israel got accepted as a UN member, Nehru stated that as the UN has accepted Israel as a member, India is moving in the direction to recognise Israel, which as a question could no longer be postponed.

## **ARTICULATION OF INDIA'S ISRAEL POLICY AND DILEMMA OF DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION**

Between 1948 and 1950, Turkey and Iran too had recognised Israel. There was a direct pressure on India to recognise Israel, as it could no longer play the domestic Muslim population card. Nehru announced India's recognition of Israel in February 1950 in a statement made in the Indian Parliament. But this declaration was verbal. Neither was there any official document that recognised Israel nor was any step taken to establish diplomatic ties. Finally, on 17th September 1950, a press communiqué was issued to recognise Israel after 28 months of requests from Israel. India thus removed the main obstacle in the recognition of Israel. The delay in Indian response was attributed to the diplomatic backlash India may have had to face from the Arab states. India clarified that the recognition to Israel in no way meant a change to Israel–Palestine policy of India and that it would continue to promote Arab cause. Other factors played a role in the diplomatic shift undertaken by India. India, through the recognition of Israel, made it clear that its support to Arabs was not unconditional and that India did expect reciprocity. India did not appreciate Egyptian vote at the UN against India on the issue of Hyderabad and its abstention at the UN vote on the Korean issue.

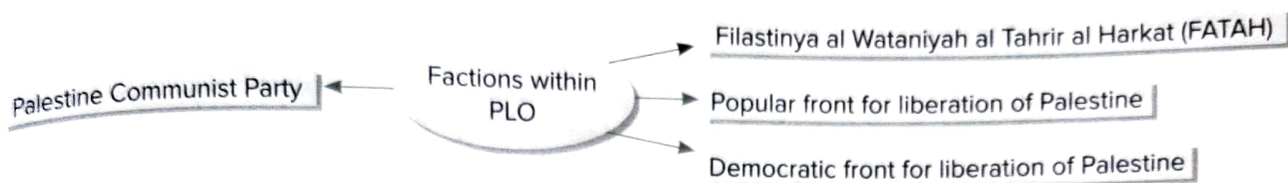
## **NEGATIVE STRAINS IN INDIA'S ISRAEL POLICY**

Even though India had recognised Israel, it did not lead to the establishment of diplomatic ties instantly. India made a distinction between legally recognising Israel and the political act of establishing diplomatic relations. India made the right choice in maintaining a balance in the diplomacy related to West Asia. In September 1951, a consular office was opened in Bombay and F. W. Pollock was made honorary Consular Agent of Israel to India. An Indian Friends of Israeli Society was formed and it continued to interact on various occasions. This was no doubt appreciated by Israel but the society had a limited influence on foreign policy. Israel perceived all these steps to be important because countries, which had declared war on it, surrounded it. Its neighbours isolated Israel and the only option for Israel was to engage with the West. In Asia, Israel perceived India as a springboard to the other part of the world. From 1949 to 1956, there was truce in the region but in 1956, Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal and prevented Israel from accessing the Suez Canal. This led to a tripartite agreement between Israel, Britain and France in Sevres, France after which, Ariel Sharon of Israel attacked Egypt and captured the Gaza Strip and Sharm el Shaikh. The subsequent intervention of the US to diffuse the crisis led to peace again. But the Suez crisis firstly led to a big blow to the supremacy of Britain and France while boosting the image of Nasser in the Arab world. India condemned Israeli aggression in Suez Canal in 1956, with Nehru branding the military operation of Israel on Egypt as a clear, naked act of aggression.

## **INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC POLICY FOR PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION**

Israel did invite Nehru in 1960 for a state visit but he declined the invitation as such a visit at this juncture could complicate matters. In 1963, in the Parliament, India clarified that due to less consular work between the two states; it is not appropriate to establish diplomatic missions with Israel. The awakened Arab world, after 1956 Suez crisis, began to ponder as to why the Arabs could not succeed in establishing the Arab Palestine. The Arabs realised that it was because they lacked an organisation such as the Jews and recognised the fact that splinter groups advocating for Arab Palestine have to be brought under a unified umbrella. In 1964, the Arabs established the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO emerged as an organisation of the Arabs fighting Israel military for supremacy in the Palestinian region. After the death of Nehru in 1964, Lal Bahadur Shastri continued the Nehruvian legacy with regard to India's Israel policy. In 1964, India accorded recognition to the PLO. India continued cooperation with Israel in the field of technology and agriculture.





## INDIA AND ISRAEL DIPLOMACY DURING THE COLD WAR

During the 1962 Indo-China conflict, India asked for military assistance from Israel and it agreed, considering that this may provide an opportunity for Israel to put in place diplomatic ties with India. In January 1963, top-level officials of Israel and India had a meeting and this became the first ever-proper contact between the two forces. In the 1965 India–Pakistan conflict, Pakistan succeeded in garnering the support of Arabs. The only Arab state standing with India was Egypt, which offered mediation in the Casablanca Summit of Arabs in September 1965. India had again requested for Israeli assistance for heavy mortar and ammunition. Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir was non-committal, but Prime Minister Levi Eshkol sent shipments of ammunition to India. Despite the support, no steps were taken by Shastri regime for modifying Israel–India ties. However, the lack of Arab support during 1965 war for India and outright support to Pakistan led the opposition in India to heavily criticise India's West Asia Policy. The coming of Indira Gandhi saw a resurgence of the hardcore pro-Arab policy. In March 1966, Israeli President Zalman Shazar, while on his way to Nepal, requested a 24-hour halt in India. The MEA requested the halt to take place in Calcutta and somehow no official greeting of the Israeli head of the state took place. This reflected the absence of depth in the relations. In 1966–67, the Arab–Israel conflict began again, with the situation becoming volatile along the Syria–Israel and Jordan–Israel border. India was affected when, in 1967, Egypt asked the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) to withdraw from Egypt-controlled areas near the border. India was a significant contributor to the UNEF. But due to Israeli aggression, many Indian UNEF officials and soldiers had died. India, at that time, was a non-permanent member of UNSC and again condemned Israel for escalation of conflict and strongly objected to the pre-emptive attack of Israel on Egypt. The opposition in India blamed the Indian government for supporting Arabs without reciprocity and stated that India should not favour Arab world as they supported Pakistan. There was a gradual rise in India of this new orthodoxy, which was not anti-Israeli but lacked assertion as they were out of the power structure. In 1967, Egypt was mobilising its military units along the Sinai and also closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israel. Israel decided to attack Egypt and this war lasted for six days (also known as the Six Days War 1967) and Israel captured the Gaza Strip from Egypt. Israel also snatched the West bank from Jordan and Golan Heights from Syria during the war and expanded its area by 200%. Arabs took the matter to the UN and urged the UN to compel Israel to vacate the occupied territory and go back to accept the borders that existed before the 1967 war. The UN passed the UN Resolution 242, urging Israel to vacate the territory and immediately resort to holding of borders as existed before 1967. The state of Israel refused to comply with UN orders. The refusal of Israel to comply with UN Resolution 242 came as a big shock to the Arab world. The PLO subsequently became more radical to tackle Israel. In the Six Days War in 1967, India blamed Israel for escalating conflict and showed support to Egypt and the Arab states. As Israel expanded its territory in 1967, India advised that Israel should follow UN Resolution 242 and go back to pre-1967 borders. However, the government toned down the anti-Israel rhetoric and began to attribute its pro-Arab policy to energy and economic considerations. India also began to use UN Resolution 242 as a new benchmark for Indo-Israel rapprochement.

## COVERT DIPLOMACY AND INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND ISRAEL DURING COLD WAR

After the creation of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) in 1968, India opened up lines of communication with the Israeli Mossad and thus began intelligence cooperation. The RAW officers in Geneva acted in collaboration with Mossad and collection of intelligence on Pakistan and thereby began a new phase of cooperation, albeit low in tone. In August 1969, the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem witnessed a fire. The mosque is the third holiest site in Islam after Mecca and Medina. The Arab states blamed Israel for lack of protection of Islamic sites and Saudi King Faisal called for the convening of an Organisation of Islamic countries (OIC) Conference. The criteria were that only countries that have Muslim majority population or a Muslim head of State would be able to participate. Pakistan long used the OIC as a forum to propagate



anti-India feelings related to Kashmir. India decided to participate in the OIC meeting planned in Rabat in September 1969. With no official invite coming despite an expression of interest by India, India insinuated that the OIC had been neglecting the interests of Indian Muslims. India also lobbied with Egypt and Indonesia, who convinced Faisal to allow an Indian delegation to allow the representation of minority Muslims of India. Pakistani President Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan decided to walkout of the Summit on 23rd September since India had garnered the support of Algeria, Egypt, Sudan and Libya. Morocco and Saudi Arabia convinced Yahya Khan to attend the last session after it was agreed that India would not be a part of last session. The final declaration by the Islamic Muslims condemned Israel for its actions. The issue caused public embarrassment for India but the government tried to justify its participation asserting the need to block Pakistan from using the OIC for its anti-India propaganda. The Arabs again stood by Pakistan in the 1971 war and showed inadequate appreciation of the refugee crisis India faced. In contrast, Israel supported India and recognised Bangladesh. The factional group called Fatah was one of the most radical groups, which began to gain popularity for its aggressive stance to Israel. In 1969, the leader of the Fatah, Yasser Arafat, became the head of the PLO and began to vouch for an armed struggle against Israel. The Arabs continued to support the aggressive tactics of the Fatah, which now dominated the PLO.

## **CHANGING DYNAMICS OF INDIA AND ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP AFTER YOM-KIPPUR WAR**

On 6th October 1973, as the Jews were busy celebrating the holy festival of Yom Kippur, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Libya attacked Israel. This took Israel by surprise, but with support of the US, Israel succeeded in defeating each Arab participant in the Yom Kippur War. Subsequently, the Arab countries of OPEC imposed an oil embargo upon the US. The efforts of the Nixon administration led to the lifting of the embargo by 1974 but also caused an upward spiral of oil prices. For the first time, the global financial balance of power tilted in favour of the Middle East. The US responded domestically with Project Independence (a project for energy security) and also decided to use the comfortable situation to advocate for peace. Post the oil embargo, PLO also shifted its original maxima list position of advocating for liberation of Palestine under Israeli control to advocating the two states theory. It pressed for the creation of Arab Palestine in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. In 1973, when the Yom Kippur War started with Egypt and Syria attacking Israel, India blamed it on Israel, citing its refusal to vacate territories captured in 1967 as a cause of Arab frustration, leading to aggression.

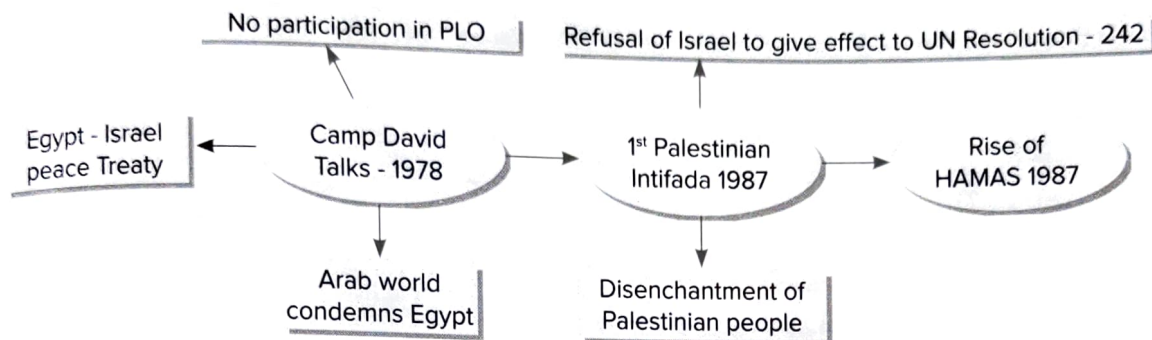
## **BIRTH OF HAMAS AND INDIA'S HAMAS POLICY**

The US in 1978, invited the Arab nations for talks at Camp David. The PLO rejected the call for talks organised by the US. However, Egypt, led by Sadat Anwar, responded positively and went ahead with the talks. The Camp David Talks of 1978 led to the Israel–Egypt Peace Treaty and Egypt agreed not to use violence against Israel while Israel agreed to more autonomy for Palestinians, with the possibility of sovereignty in future. However, the Arab world and the PLO denounced the Israel–Egypt rapprochement. In 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and all Arabs condemned it. India did not condemn the Soviet invasion owing to proximate ties with Soviets but to prevent ostracisation from Arabs. India immediately granted full diplomatic status to the PLO and allowed it to establish a diplomatic mission in New Delhi. In 1980, Indira Gandhi came to power. When Israel objected to Indian criticism of Israeli attack on Iraq in 1981 and Lebanon in 1982, the Israeli counsel Youssef Hassen, who had criticised India, was expelled. This again took Indo-Israel relations to their lowest point.

However, in the second half of the 1980s, India witnessed a change in political leadership as Rajiv Gandhi was elected as the Prime Minister of India on 24 December 1984. Rajiv Gandhi, educated at Cambridge University, signalled a fresh Indian approach towards Israel and though unable to reverse the traditional Indian pro-Arab foreign policy completely, initiated a number of moves in favour of Israel. He also held a meeting with Shimon Peres, his Israeli counterpart, at a UN session in 1985. The PLO was based in Lebanon. When Israel attacked Lebanon, the PLO's headquarters moved to Tunisia. In 1985, Israel bombarded the PLO offices in Tunisia. India condemned the Israeli attacks. In October 1985, the UNGA session began. The Arabs sponsored a resolution for seeking the expulsion of Israel from UN. India abstained at the vote. Later, India allowed an Israeli Vice Counsel back in Mumbai. Rajiv Gandhi, in 1987, allowed the Israeli Tennis team to play in India at the Davis cup. This event became a diplomatic move much appreciated by Israelis who, since 1960s, had not been granted visas by India to attend sports events. Later the government allowed the Israeli consulate to have jurisdiction over



Kerala. Despite a breakthrough at Camp David talks with Egypt, there was no big achievement overall as the PLO did not participate while Israel refused to give effect to the UN Resolution 242. The frustration amongst Arabs for their failure to make Israel vacate territory and the intense disenchantment in Palestinian people led to the first Intifada. The first Intifada culminated with rise of Harkat-al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (HAMAS), led by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.



HAMAS emerged as an organisation in Gaza Strip and vowed to eliminate Israel by force. At this time, the response of the Fatah was different and it proposed that as an organisation, its focus would remain on establishing the Arab Palestine in Gaza Strip and West Bank.

## INDIA AND ISRAEL DIPLOMACY AT THE END OF COLD WAR

After the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the Congress staged a comeback, with Narsimha Rao as Prime Minister. Rao formed the government in a coalition and was not constrained by the Muslim vote bank politics of the INC. In 1990–91, Rao steered the Indian foreign policy based on regional and domestic developments. In 1990–91, there were internal divisions in the Arab world related to the Gulf War. In the Kuwait crisis, PLO supported Iraq while Arabs supported Kuwait. Saddam Hussein too sided with PLO to position himself as a leader of the Palestinian cause. The support of PLO to Iraq led to isolation of PLO in the Arab world. Domestically in India, the economy needed a push and the USA was the only country that could give India the needed financial muscle. India understood that the US financial assistance is tied to India opening up its relationship with Israel.

## POST-COLD WAR POLICY OF DE-HYPHENATION BETWEEN INDIA AND ISRAEL

Since 1987, Pakistan had been using the US-trained Afghan Mujahedeen's to create unrest in Kashmir. India began to suppress this externally sponsored insurgency in Kashmir; Pakistan successfully used the OIC forum to internationalise the Kashmir conflict by highlighting the human rights violation by India in Kashmir. OIC even decided to send a fact-finding mission to Kashmir, which was strongly protested by India. India asserted that Kashmir was an internal conflict of India and OIC had no jurisdiction on an internal issue related to India. India felt that its pro-Arab policy during the entire Cold War did not serve any strategic support to India for Kashmir. On 23rd January 1992, in a cabinet meeting, discussions on diplomatic relations with Israel were undertaken. In July 1992, India extended the consul relations to full diplomatic relations and Ephraim Duek presented his credentials to Indian President as the first Israeli Ambassador to India. India asserted that there was an economic logic to India's improved ties with Israel. India wanted to use the scientific and technical expertise of Israel for its domestic development. The change happened in 1992 because Narsimha Rao was convinced that a rehaul of our West Asian engagement was long due. The domestic political repercussions no longer guided our policy now. The realisation that India can gain from security relations with Israel by engaging strategically, also acted as a factor. As the Cold War ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989, the US emerged as a superpower. In 1991, the US invited the Arabs again at Madrid as a follow up to the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty. In the Madrid conference in 1991, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and some influential Palestinian people participated, although the PLO had not been invited as a representative of the Palestinian people. The only success of the Madrid Conference was the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty. Syrian insistence on reclaiming Golan Height delayed the Syria-Israel truce. Israel did propose, however, that it would

hand over Golan Heights back to Syria if Syria concludes a Peace Treaty. The talks with Lebanon in Madrid could not proceed as Iran exercised influence on Lebanon, through Hezbollah. The US followed up the Madrid talks of 1991 with the Oslo Accords in 1993. For the first time in the history of the Middle East crisis, the US succeeded in bringing Israel and the PLO at a common platform for talks. HAMAS continued with its military position and therefore was not a part of Oslo talks. The Oslo talks saw the 'Land for Peace' proposals. It was decided that Israel would undertake a phased withdrawal from Gaza Strip and West Bank while the PLO would accept the existence of Israel and would do away with idea of using force against Israel. It was agreed that PLO would establish a Palestinian Authority (PA), which would act as a political entity to govern Gaza Strip and West Bank. Israel was to vacate Gaza Strip and West Bank by 1998. The PLO, in the meantime, had also established the PA.

## **REASONS FOR SHIFT IN INDIA'S ISRAEL POLICY AT THE END OF COLD WAR**

Core reasons that compelled India to make a shift in its Israel policy are:

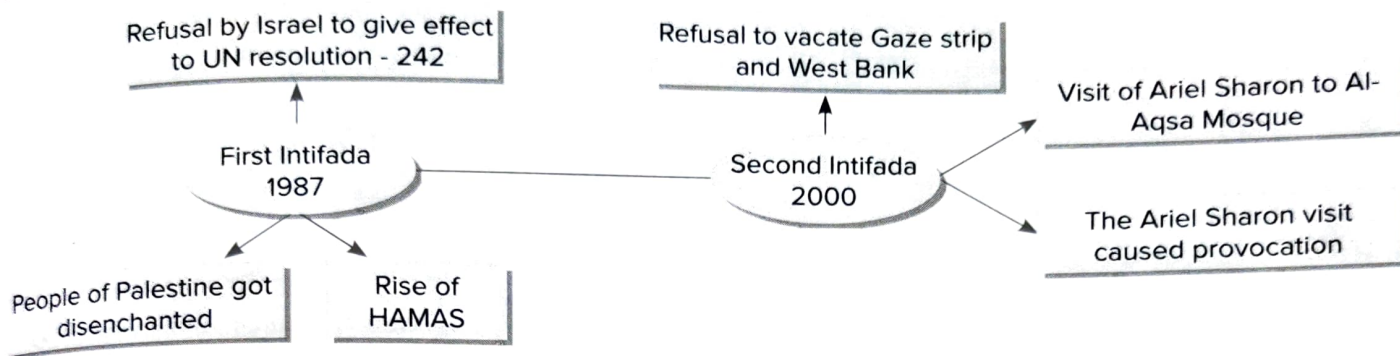
1. The stand of OIC on Kashmir issue.
2. Internal divisions within the Arab world on the ongoing Gulf war.
3. Jordan (Madrid Conference 1991) and Egypt (Camp David Accord 1978) had already signed a peace treaty with Israel.
4. PLO and Israel initiated peace talks in 1993 in Oslo leading to the tectonic Oslo Accords.
5. Indian economy needed a push from the USA, which made financial assistance as a precondition to rapprochement with Israel.
6. India needed a defence partner (which the USA eventually became) after the disintegration of the Cold War and demise of the USSR.
7. China too gave diplomatic recognition to Israel at the end of the Cold War prior to West Asia peace talks, thereby making a shift in its own policy of the Cold War.

## **FROM LOW OCTANE RELATIONSHIP OF INDIA TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH ISRAEL**

Narsimha Rao opened up diplomatic relations with Israel but preferred to have a low-level engagement, which analysts attribute to the Congress government's desire to not compromise Muslim votes. He allowed only two cabinet ministers of his government to travel to Israel. The government resorted to a cautious approach of allowing the private actors and bureaucracy to be used to clearly identify areas where both would cooperate. India also clarified there was no change in Palestine policy and India would continue to support Arabs in the Palestine issue. Indian government instructed J. N. Dixit to make a case to Ambassadors of Arab states about India's Palestine policy. Dixit asserted to the individual diplomats that India expected reciprocity from Arab states in cases of issues pertaining to Pakistan. Post-1991, India decided to embark upon a journey to focus on self-reliance in military technology. In this context, Israel became a core partner for India as it had vast experience in the Military Industrial Complex it had established in collaboration with the West. Israel had technology, which they had developed indigenously and therefore was not bound by End User Licensing Agreements (EULA). Israel too expressed willingness to work with India through joint ventures. Though the relationship between the two states did pick up, but remained short of a genuine strategic partnership. After 1991, as India adopted the policy of diversification in defence industry, it began to forge a new alliance with Israel. Israel not only had a large military-industrial complex but through arms support in 1962, 1965 and 1971, had proven its mettle. Moreover, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Indian defence industry's reliance on Soviet equipment became a factor since Israelis had developed special skills in upgrading Soviet era equipment. Thus, both defence and economic ties between the nations improved. Even though a strong case was made for defence deals with Israel, the Indian government decided not to publicly talk about the same. In 1998, when the BJP came to power, there were high-level visits from India by L. K. Advani (Home Minister) and Jaswant Singh (Foreign Minister) to Israel. The rise of a right wing government in Israel by 1998 created an issue. In 1998, the



Israeli government refused to vacate Gaza Strip and West Bank (as per Oslo Accord 1993). Subsequently, Israel's PM Ariel Sharon visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (the third holiest site in Islam after Mecca and Medina) and this move provoked the Palestinians. This provocation manifested as the second Intifada in 2000. The second Intifada caused heavy violence in the region again.



## STRATEGIC DEFENCE DIPLOMACY BETWEEN INDIA AND ISRAEL

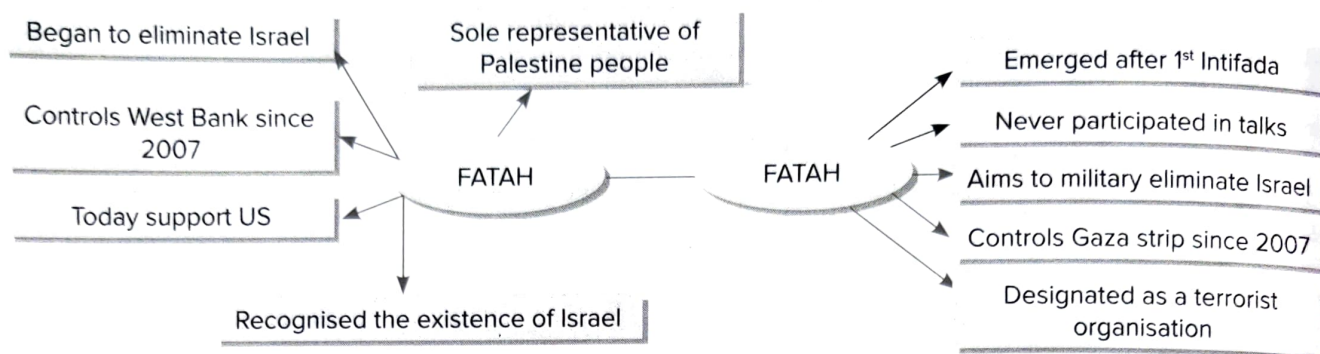
The volatile situation came under control in 2003 when Ariel Sharon announced the Disengagement Plan. Israel agreed to vacate Gaza Strip and West Bank by 2005. However, in 2004, Yasser Arafat died and was succeeded by Mahmoud Abbas. In 2005, Israel vacated Gaza Strip and West Bank and elections were organised on behalf of the PLO. Both PA and the HAMAS decided to contest elections. The US and its allies extended their support to PA in the election. As the results of the election were announced, it stunned everybody as HAMAS won the election in Gaza Strip while Fatah won a few seats in the territory of West Bank. This sowed the seeds of subsequent Fatah–HAMAS conflict. In 2007, after Saudi Arabia brokered negotiations, HAMAS and Fatah formed the National Unity Government (NUG) where Khaled Mashal led HAMAS and Mahmoud Abbas led PA. The violence still continued due to ideological differences. The NUG collapsed in June 2007, after which the HAMAS took control of the Gaza Strip while the Fatah took over the control of West Bank. As Fatah enjoyed the support of the US, in 2014, it succeeded in making Palestine a non-member state of the UN and in 2015, a member state of International Criminal Court. Hamas as an organisation continues to deploy military tactics and remains committed to eliminate Israeli military. In December 2016, the US abstained at the Security Council resolution related to a resolution sponsored by New Zealand on the settlement issue in the Palestinian territory. This was the first time in the history of creation of Israel that the US, instead of supporting Israel, abstained from a resolution and came down heavily on Israel. However, Israel since 2007 has been trying to illegally occupy territories in Gaza Strip and West Bank and has been creating 'settlements' in these lands. This illegal occupation of territory is a violation of the Hansell Memorandum and Geneva Conventions. The Trump Administration in 2020 has supported Israel in illegal occupation of these lands. This is primarily an attempt by Trump to appease the Jewish lobby in the US prior to US elections. Biden has followed a hands off approach till date.

### Negev Summit 2022

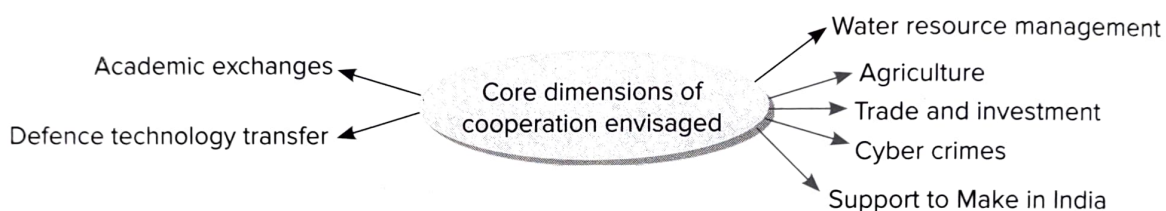
In recent times, there has been a concerted attempt by the Sunni world to patch up ties with Israel. In May 2022, UAE, Morocco, Egypt and Bahrain held a summit with Israel in a resort in Negev desert. The Sunni world and Jews are collaborating now to tackle the rising hostilities unleashed in the region by Iran.

## INDIA'S POLICY WITH PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY AND HAMAS

The Indian President visited Israel in October 2015 in the first ever Head of State level visit to Israel. The President was honoured by Al-Quds University and was hailed as the 'Knight of Peace'. He decided to strengthen cooperation in agriculture, defence and technology sectors. There were MoUs in avoidance of double taxation, culture, academic and student exchange.



## DIMENSIONS OF FUTURE COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA AND ISRAEL



## HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF INDIA'S PALESTINE POLICY

Since the Indian National Movement, India has been positively inclined towards Arabs and India has rejected Zionism. India believed Zionism is a colonial movement of the Jewish people to try and eventually colonise Palestine. India did not harbour any negativity towards Jewish people, but it rejected the ideology of the Jewish people to colonise Palestine. After India became independent, India recognised the creation of Israel at the UN, yet extended no diplomatic relations with Israel. In the 1956 Suez crisis, India blamed Israel for escalating conflicts. After the 1967 war, India favoured the UN Resolution 242 and advocated that Israel should vacate the territory captured in the 1967 war. In 1974, India allowed the PLO to establish an office in New Delhi and also accepted the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian People. In 1981, Yasser Arafat paid a state visit to India. In 1988, India recognised the state of Palestine and opened a representative office in Gaza Strip, which in 2003 was shifted to the city of Ramallah. Post the Oslo Accords of 1993, India has supported the Fatah or the PLO or the PA. India does not support the HAMAS. In 2011, India supported the membership of Palestine to the UNESCO. The Representative Office of India in Ramallah started issuing Visas since 2013. In 2018, Narendra Modi was the first ever-Indian PM to visit Palestine state.

## MODI DOCTRINE ON PALESTINE AND INDIA'S POLICY SHIFT

Since 2017, there is a subtle shift in our policy for Palestine. The shift was visible from the fact that when Modi visited Israel, he did not visit Ramallah. The first sign of a change in the policy by Modi was seen in 2015. In 2015, at the UN Human Rights Council vote against Israel on war crimes in Gaza, India abstained along with Kenya, Ethiopia, Macedonia and Paraguay as the resolution related to International Criminal Court, to which India is not a signatory. In 2017, Modi government announced the new policy of India towards Palestine by making a statement that India supports

- Sovereign
- Independent
- United and
- Viable Palestine
- Co-existing peacefully with Israel

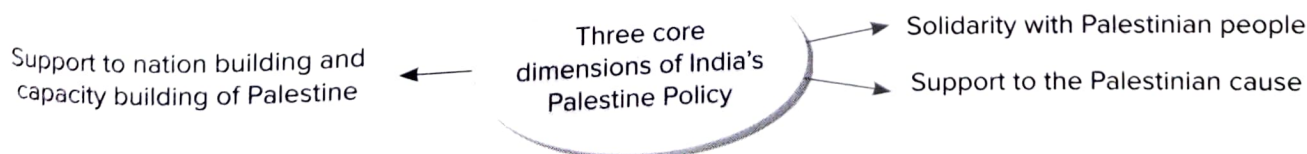


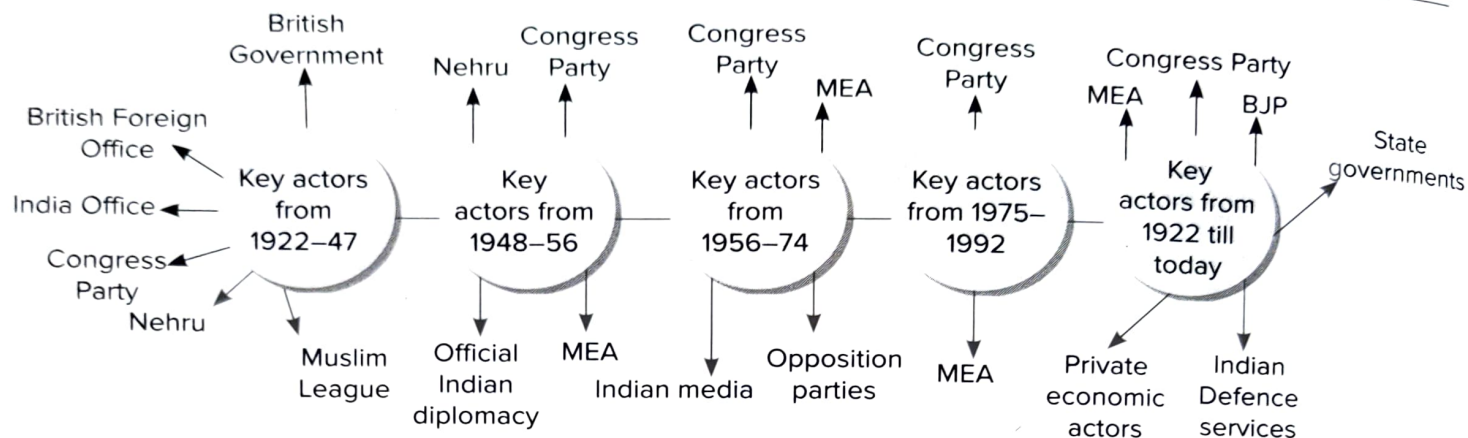
This statement, which is highly loaded, has far reaching implications on the way India now looks at the issue. India has always supported an independent and a viable Palestine. The concern is with respect to the word called “United Palestine”, announced by India for the first time. The United Palestine involves Gaza Strip and West Bank territory. The unification of Palestine has not happened because Gaza Strip is still occupied militarily by HAMAS. Internationally recognised Palestinian Authority, led by Mahmoud Abbas, controls the West Bank. By advocating for a United Palestine, India has collided with Israel that today advocates for a one state solution (in contrast to the two state solution, which India too favours) that is an Israel without Palestine. This is where the catch lies. The major shift has been made silently by India with respect to East Jerusalem. Till now, India had always asserted the need to have a sovereign Palestine state that will have its capital at East Jerusalem. On various past occasions of diplomatic engagement with Palestinians, India asserted East Jerusalem should be the capital of Palestine state. This is surprising because the UN Security Council too never mentioned till date that East Jerusalem would be the capital of Palestine state.

## INDIA'S NEW EAST JERUSALEM POLICY UNDER AND MODI DOCTRINE

The Modi government made the silent shift. During Modi's meeting with Mahmoud Abbas in 2017, the statement made a mention of a united Palestine with no mention of East Jerusalem as the capital. The change in Indian policy on East Jerusalem has to be seen with respect to India's policy shifts in UNESCO over East Jerusalem. East Jerusalem is an area with intense historical, theological and political contestations. The major contestation in the East Jerusalem is with respect to claims by Islamic states and Israel. Jerusalem is a holy city with Mount Moriah and Mount Zion (collectively known as the temple mount, located in the Eastern part of the city of Jerusalem) being the two most crucial mounts in the history of humanity. According to the Jews, in 957 BCE, King Solomon built a temple on the temple mount. The Babylonians destroyed the first temple. In 516 BCE, Zerubbabel built the second temple on the ruins of the first temple, which was eventually sacked by the Romans. Many years later, Umayyad clan (a Muslim rule) decided to superimpose the Al Aqsa Mosque and Dome of rock on the ruins of the second temple. The objective of the Umayyad clan was to assert the Islamic supremacy over the non-Islamic lands. Since then, as the time progressed, the Christians, Jews and Muslims have made contesting claims over the Eastern part of Jerusalem. Historically, one thing is clear is that the Temple Mount is a Jewish site. Islamic states assert that the area of East Jerusalem belongs to the Muslims. The Jews, however, make a contesting claim that the East Jerusalem historically had two Jewish temples built and the area belongs to the Jews. India feels that these claims and counterclaims need to be archeologically identified and resolved through mutual respect, negotiations and accommodation. In 2016, in UNESCO, 58 Members endorsed a resolution that exclusively endorsed Islamic narratives and out rightly dropped any reference to the Jewish temples. The resolution declared that the Temple Mount is an Islamic structure. Ironically, in the 2016 resolution, India voted against Israel. This led to massive protest by Israel on the Indian decision. There is a belief that the Indian decision was done by the foreign policy bureaucracy that was rooted in the historical legacy of support to the Palestinians against Israel. However, with the intervention of the PMO, when the similar resolutions were taken up in 2017, India abstained from the vote. The decision to abstain was a clear signal of the shift in Indian policy towards East Jerusalem. Since then, till today, India asserts now that India stands by a united Palestine (with no reference to East Jerusalem as the capital). What began in 1992 with Rao calling it ‘balancing’ between India and Israel is now de-hyphenation by Modi.

## MIND MAP





## QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

S. No.	Questions for Practice
1.	How does India seek to gain from Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030? What are the options for India in energy and strategic defence partnerships? Do you think Saudi Arabia must cease India–Pakistan hyphenation for win–win partnerships with India? Examine.
2.	A strong partnership is taking shape between India and Israel. Examine how it can change India's stakes and status in West Asia.
3.	By skewing its policy towards Saudi Arabia in pursuit of short-term goals, India runs the risk of antagonising Tehran. Do you think India needs a balanced West Asia policy?
4.	As Gulf jobs and remittances decline, India must re-orient the Look West Asia policy to attract investments from the region. Examine the statement in the light of instability in West Asia and opportunities for India.
5.	The joint statement of India and Israel during Prime Minister Modi's visit reflects changed geopolitical realities on India's Palestine Policy. Examine.



## SECTION 8

# INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SOUTHEAST, EAST ASIA AND INDO-PACIFIC

- 1. India's Idea of East: From Antiquity to the Cold War
- 2. Streamlining and Restructuring India's Eastward Engagement and India's Look East Policy
- 3. India's Act East Policy, RCEP Diplomacy and Stand on South China Sea Dispute
- 4. The Era of Minilateralism: The QUAD, Indo-Pacific, AUKUS and Indian Diplomacy
- 5. India's Strategic and Economic Relations with Japan
- 6. India's Strategic and Economic Relations with South Korea
- 7. India's Strategic and Economic Relations with Vietnam
- 8. India's Strategic and Economic Relations with Australia
- 9. India's Strategic and Economic Relations with Regional Powers

### AN OVERVIEW

This is one of the most important areas from where questions are regularly asked by the UPSC. The questions are of two types. Firstly, we have bilateral questions on India's relationship with Vietnam, Japan and Australia. Secondly, we have questions that relate to India's participation in QUAD, Indo-Pacific, ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Forum and its trade and security interests in South China Sea and Pacific Islands Forum.

**Potential foresight** In the recent times, India has deepened its presence in this part of the world through FTA with ASEAN, participation overtly in Indo-Pacific and QUAD. The Act East Policy and India's military dimensions of diplomacy through Malabar and Milan are visible. The author is certain that this area will continue to be important in the years ahead.



# 1

## CHAPTER

# India's Idea of East: From Antiquity to the Cold War

### INDIA'S EASTWARD ENGAGEMENT: CORRECTING THE PROBLEMATIC NARRATIVES

For long, amongst the historians, diplomats and research scholars, there has been a feeling that India has not adequately engaged with the countries in the region of Southeast Asia and East Asia. The narrative was strengthened by certain Indian diplomats using the documents of Indian Ministry of External Affairs, thereby endorsing this criticism. Such a criticism is unwarranted because there is no rhyme or reason that actually explains India's neglect of the region. However, there may have been disruptions in India's diplomatic engagement, but in this section we will learn that these disruptions were not unilateral but were driven by factors not in India's control. A common understanding is that Indian interests in the region arose in 1990s when India announced the Look East Policy. This is a misplaced notion because the engagement is more than two millennia old and India, in reality, has never stopped looking the East. The matters of neglect were highlighted when President Obama, in 2010, told the Indian Parliamentarians that India needed to engage with the region more actively and Look East was not creating the zeal that was expected of India. This avoidable intellectual provocation hit India's long cultural and civilisational connect since antiquity and was used again by the academic community to assert that India was in an era of disruption. The then UPA government ignored the advice of Obama and the subsequent Modi government implicitly endorsed the American narrative by changing the Look East Policy with Act East Policy (we will elaborate both terms and analyse later in the section).

The purpose of re-writing the entire section of India's relationship with Southeast and East Asia in this edition of the book is to correct the perceptual narratives and offer the civil services aspirants the story of India's eastward engagement from antiquity till now. The narrative of this section is designed to help the readers understand that the phases of low-key engagements were explained because of India's British colonial experience and subsequent economic inability to sustain the vitality and vigour in the relationship after independence. Also, the period of the Cold War brought in a host of ideological factors that constrained Indian engagement since the end of the Cold War. India deepened the outreach and displayed a new enthusiasm. This section will also carefully analyse if changing the name from 'Look' to 'Act' East Policy has brought about any radical shift in the way India looks at the region or not.

### THE LAND OF SUN WORSHIPPERS: THE IDENTITY BINDING INDIA AND EAST

India is a land that worships the rising sun. This worship is ingrained in Indians since the Indus Valley Civilisation. As per this rationale, India has always looked at the East with a sense of reverence and devotion. Because the sun is not just seen as a source of light but energy that drives life. India has integrated this relationship into its cultural and civilisational philosophy. The importance of sun as the centre of human philosophy was subsequently nurtured by the Vedic literature where the four Vedas talk about different energies and virtues of sun. The Sun Temple at Konark on the east coast of India is a testimony of how the reverence of the sun is institutionalised in India. The health system that India stands for, Yoga,



also has a series of postures where the human body bowing to the sun in the form of Surya Namaskar. The civilisational and cultural diffusion is explained by adoption of Hinduism and Buddhism in countries of Southeast Asia. The process of cultural diffusion that began in the first millennium of the Christian era continued non-stop till the seventh century. The coming of Mughals did not stop the cultural diffusion but only slowed down the momentum of the process because even during this period the trade and voyages did continue. In fact, during the Mughal period, the Indian people on Indian coasts acted as intermediaries in spread of Islam to the East. The South Indian Muslims, especially from the region of Malabar, played an important role in taking Islam to the region. The Islam that got transferred to the region was a version that adopted coexistence with Buddhism and Hinduism, as visible in Indonesia and Malaysia even today. The British are responsible for introducing a strategic factor in India's relationship with the East. The spirit of engagement that India had nurtured during the pre-colonial era was now replaced by territorial expansion consolidation and control of the British. This was accentuated by the use of Indian natives in the British army to fight the French and Portuguese in the region. The use of Indian soldiers by the colonial army distorted the idea of India in the perception of the East and added a military dimension that never existed till date. The perception of India was dented again when Subhash Chandra Bose demanded liberation from British by joining hands with aggressor Japan during the World War II.

## TRANSITIONS IN INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT AND RISE OF THE INDO-PACIFIC THINKING

After independence, the security threat from Southeast Asia to India never dominated Indian policy discourse. A minor hiccup was seen in 1965 when Indonesia had threatened India that it would block Indian access to Andaman and Nicobar islands. This was because Indonesia displayed an overt tilt to Pakistan during the war and the move was driven primarily by an Islamic identity, imposed by Pakistan on India via Indonesia. In the 1980s, another hiccup was visible when an Indian naval officer made a statement that India should aspire to become a blue-water navy (a naval force that has capabilities to do power projection in foreign waters). The statement was perceived as aggressive by Australians who thought that India could not be given the liberty to dominate a huge swath of waters of Indian Ocean. However, the controversy died out soon because India neither had financial capacity nor had an aggressive design for any neighbour in the East. Contrary to such scares, Lee Kuan Yew, the head of Singapore was quite favourable for a role for India in the East in security realm. He advocated that not only India offer security training to the armed forces of nations of the region but also wanted India to develop capabilities to stand up to China. India did not respond to the initiatives of Lee because it was not interested in regional disputes of the region as it had always followed the policy of non-intervention and non-intrusion. However, when the Cold War ended, India's economy embarked upon a path of expansion and Indian foreign policy acquired a new strategic vision. The future discourse was set by India through the Look East Policy and later by the Act East Policy. The India's idea of the East has expanded to include a new thought called Indo-Pacific. The idea of Indo-Pacific was first visualised by the India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In his book 'Discovery of India', he mentioned that Atlantic in future would not be more relevant and Pacific Ocean would take the place of Atlantic Ocean. In this context, Nehru asserted that India would have adequate influence to exercise in the region and Indian Ocean once it would develop economic prowess. This would allow India, stated Nehru, to position herself as an economic and strategic player in the development of world. Building on Nehruvian thought, it was in 2004 that the Indian Maritime Doctrine had proposed the idea of shift from Atlantic-Pacific to Pacific-Indian Ocean region. This idea of Indo-Pacific was raised for the first time by Shinzo Abe, the Japanese Prime Minister in 2007. Abe was inspired by the book written by Aurangzeb's brother Dara Shikoh titled 'Confluence of Two Seas'. He envisaged the need for India and Japan to come closer by forging a geostrategic space of Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean to create Indo-Pacific as a new geostrategic reality. Today, India looks at Indo-Pacific as a geopolitical construct that offers a new vision of world order where there is unbridled commitment to build confidence, resolve disputes by following international law, promote peace and ensure security and growth for all. The Chinese have not perceived the concept in a positive sense.

### What is meant by Indo-Pacific?

Indo-Pacific is a driver of global politics that replaces the old concept of Asia-Pacific where Indian and Pacific Oceans are seen as a seamless link to promote trade, growth and well-being of humanity by ensuring the protection of sea lanes of communication. As an operational concept, it links the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean, the two dynamic oceans of the future to sustain global growth.



There has been no official response by Chinese of the concept but the Chinese academia has debated the concept and has found it vague, underdeveloped and an idea driven by the West to contain the rise of China in the region. In any case, the Indo-Pacific is seen by India as a cultural, economic, political and security continuum that stretches from Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean with common opportunities, intersecting maritime and security interests and challenges for the region. Today, the term Indo-Pacific is given enormous strategic weight in official circles and the government in India looks at the term rooted in historical and civilisational experiences of India and an emerging geostrategic reality. The expansion of culture of India into Pacific world is a grand chapter in the human history. In 2017, India initially hesitated to embrace the concept when Donald Trump, the then US President, proposed the idea in modern avatar. This was because India had reservations that by accepting the American definition of Indo-Pacific, it would strategically become close to the US and this would cost India her 'strategic autonomy'. However, since then, India had shed off these concerns because when India introspected, it found that the concept of Indo-Pacific was rooted in its own cultural and civilisational past and had been nurtured by its long historical traditions. Indo-Pacific for India is a new powerful instrument for cultural and strategic diplomacy and India now openly embraces the idea of a shared vision for maritime cooperation in the region.

## SEVEN WAVES OF INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH SOUTHEAST AND EAST ASIA

When we analyse India's engagement with the region, we can distinctly fit it into seven phases.

Phase	Distinct feature
First	Hindu–Buddhist influence
Second	Islamic influence
Third	British era and national movement
Fourth	Nehruvian era
Fifth	Post-Nehruvian era
Sixth	Look East Policy era
Seventh	Act East Policy era

The first and second waves offer a fascinating picture of India's cultural engagement that has left a deep imprint on the region. In the first phase, we observe the relations going back to the pre-historic era. The history is more distinct from the second century AD where we find names of Indian kings commonly used by kings in the East. This period also sees a distinctness in practices related to religion, customs, manners and language (with Sanskrit having an impact on their languages even today). A great amount of royal patronage was provided during this time to keep up the trade and cultural engagement. The Mahayana Buddhism, dominant in the region in Korea, Japan, China and Taiwan, till date uses Sanskrit for religious texts and rituals. Empress Wu in China took steps to even promote Buddhism as a 'state religion' in the seventh century. The significant contribution of this phase was that it manifested in emergence of world class centres of learning, as seen in Nalanda and Vikramshila universities. The Cholas played an important role in adding a strategic dimension to India's engagement with the East. In 1050 AD, the Chola king Rajendra Chola, as per an inscription in Thanjavur, used a powerful navy deployed in the Andamans to challenge the might of Sri Vijaya rule in the East and after defeating him, established Chola power in the Malaya peninsula. This is a proof of how Indian kings not only explored and navigated the Pacific islands but also dominated the region with display of hard power. However, the Islamic phase was different from the first phase in the sense that it was devoid of any royal patronage. This period saw Indian rulers becoming obsessed with north-western borders considering that the primary threats arose from the region. This led to a reduced vision for Southeast and East Asia. Even though Akbar had an impressive navy, but the navy was designed to deter Arakanese and Portugal from Myanmar and Indo-China. With rise of Muslim rulers in India, two things happened. Firstly, the state patronage for promotion of Buddhism and Hinduism was replaced with patronage for Islam. Secondly, the Muslim rulers did not stop the ongoing cultural and economic engagements with the region but trade was relegated to common people than state. The third phase saw British designing the imprint colonially while the actors of national movement countering the British thought with India's civilisational legacy. The third phase was interesting because it offered a glimpse of how contrasting



waves, working with different objectives and even led by different actors, contributed in leaving an imprint. The British, as explained previously in the chapter, used the native Indians to suppress the societies in the East. They used the British Indian capital in Calcutta till 1911 to develop colonial and strategic presence in Southeast Asia. In this sense, the Indians were gradually perceived by people of the region as local tools of oppression. So, when the British took labours from India to work in plantations in colonies in the East, the labours were seen as an alien community and a threat to the local poor strata of the colonial society. This has had a repercussion till today because the Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) living in the East till date are looked as outsiders. The British awakened the strategic dimension that was initially created by Rajendra Chola. During the World War II, India was exposed to an invasion from Japan and this Japanese invasion opened the eyes of Indian national movement leaders on the importance of Southeast Asia as a maritime compact. It was during this British period only when the nationalist leaders of India established a direct contact with political leaders of the region. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, Nehru, S. C. Bose, Chiang Kai Shek, Gandhi, Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta had frequent deliberations. The Congress often passed resolution against the use of British force in colonising Southeast Asia and this allowed Indian leaders to open a parallel yet diametrically opposite engagement with the region. The most important individual who played the crucial role in India's eastward engagement during this period was Tagore and he often emphasised the cultural and civilisational links between the regions. On the 2nd April 1929, Tagore even wrote a poem 'Lamp of East' in the Korean newspaper 'The Dong-A Ilbo'.

## THE NEHRUVIAN WAVE AND INDIA'S EASTWARD IDEA: HOPES BELIED

The two core drivers of Nehruvian thinking in the East were India's civilisational and cultural connect with the East and Nehru's passion in struggle against colonial oppression. He designed a vision for Asia which was not only free from colonialism but also was resurgent, culturally homogenous and politically harmonious. On the basis of the context of national, regional and international political realities of the time, the Nehruvian thinking for the East can be seen in three layers. The first layer is the period before Indian independence. In this period, Nehru as a leader of Indian national movement witnessed not only the two world wars but also anti-imperialistic struggles in Asia and Africa and these events enabled Nehru to articulate his vision of foreign policy. These events were followed by imprint of India's civilisational legacy on Nehru which enabled him to use the historical linkages to support anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles in the region. This is why when Nehru participated in Indian participation in Brussels International Congress Against Colonial Repression in 1927, he announced that India, on attaining independence, would leave no stone unturned to assist the countries of the region in their struggle against imperialism. In 1936, a foreign department was established within the Congress to reach out to states in the East and grasp their situations. In 1945, Indonesia, during the World War II was under the Japanese control declared independence but it was neither accepted by Britain nor by Dutch. The Dutch in fact tried to re-colonise Indonesia compelling India to take the matter to the United Nations. At the UN, India linked the colonialism of Indonesia by Dutch as a security threat to Asia. Nehru stated that if colonialism continued to linger on in the region around India and other nations of Asia, they would have no freedom to carry out independent foreign policy. This led India to equate the independence of Indonesia as a case for security of Asia. The UN intervened and ensured in 1949 that Indonesia was not colonised and became independent under the leadership of Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta. Sukarno visited India and called Nehru as his political father and Indonesia decided to become a non-aligned state, but with an open economy, and worked for maintaining peace and equilibrium in Asia. The success of India and Indonesia eventually led to the birth of the Bandung Conference in 1955. In this conference India was able to champion the idea of decolonisation and independence of states. The conference also marked the zenith of India's multilateral diplomacy and was a grand success of India's eastward diplomacy. This conference was also seen by Nehru as a launching pad for Indian vision of Asia in world affairs.

### Nehru's Enthusiasm and Indonesia

Nehru was very enthusiastic in letting Indonesia organise the Bandung Conference. He went into minutest of the details in organisation of the mega event. While micro-observing the preparations for the conference, Nehru told his counterpart that adequate provision of bathrooms and lavatories is essential in any mega event. While Indonesia was prompt to take the instructions of Nehru seriously but they were slightly uncomfortable on the remarks because they saw the remarks as a reflection of their inability to organise an international event. It is stated that Sukarno did not communicate the discomfort upfront but felt humiliated.



## INDIA AND INDONESIA RELATIONS: FRIENDS TURNED FOES

Even though the Bandung Conference is seen as a positive event, ironically India and Indonesia turned out to be the biggest losers. There are several reasons attributed for this. Firstly, the Western countries were certainly not comfortable in seeing a rising Asian solidarity as they found this solidarity as an upfront threat to their world view. Secondly, the Western media deliberately tried to highlight the internal differences amongst Asian leaders in the conference. For instance, during the conference, Sri Lanka insisted that countries of the East Europe were under the colonial rule of Soviet Union. This definition of colonialism was in sharp contrast to the definition of colonialism Nehru promoted because he wanted to advocate a generic condemnation of the Western colonialism. Eventually, the conference agreed to 'condemn colonialism in all its manifestations and forms' as a trade-off; a narrative picked up by the Western media. Even though the Western nations had tried their level best to keep China out of the conference, but China did participate. The participation of China was an opportunity for China to cultivate their relationships with Southeast Asians. After the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, Chinese used a narrative that Indian arrogance was responsible for the conflict and they used this narrative to build their relationship with Southeast Asians while pushing India down in its desires for a role in Asian leadership. Thirdly, post-1962, the Southeast Asians became uncomfortable with both India and China because they perceived that these Asian giants were trying to vie for supremacy in the region. This compelled them to shed off engagements with both and explore regional minilaterals and thus ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) was born in 1967 as a consequence.

After the Bandung Conference, India's relationship with Indonesia also began to get adversely affected. For instance, India and Indonesia began to have differing perceptions on their territorial identities. The Indonesians were upset that Dutch decided to chip away West Papua, which was a territory that Indonesia claimed. While India asserted that West Papua belonged to Indonesia, it added a caveat that Indonesia should resolve the territorial dispute of West Papua as per wishes of people in a peaceful manner. After the Bandung Conference, Indonesia was keen to organise another version of the Afro-Asian Conference. However, Nehru was non-committal in letting Indonesia organise such a conference because the Afro-Asian Conference of 1947 was designed to seek decolonisation of Asia and Africa only. By 1955, Nehru had conceptualised non-alignment and was not keen on limiting the participation only to Asia and Africa but also wanted participation from Latin America and Europe. Indonesia perceived the lack of interest of India in the second Afro-Asian Conference as a softening stand of colonialism and imperialism. In Belgrade Conference in 1961, Nehru articulated that colonialism was 'not an immediate threat'. This assessment was made by Nehru because the world was under the Cold War and was witnessing great power rivalry which was taking the world on the brink of a nuclear confrontation. For Nehru, the Belgrade Conference in 1961 was an opportunity to portray non-alignment as a balancer to the rising tensions of the Cold War. Nehru also was not very comfortable with the rising political crisis in Indonesia where Sukarno had proclaimed himself as the 'president for life' as this was perceived by Nehru as a great setback to democratic and federal credentials that Indonesia committed earlier. The India and Indonesia relations began to lose warmth and reached their lowest ebb in 1965. Even during the 1962 conflict with China, Malaysia became a competitor to Indonesia. Indonesia remained neutral in 1962 but Malaysia, led by Tunku Abdul Rehman, decided to support India and even created a 'Save Democracy Fund' and contributed one million rupees to India. This was perceived by Indonesia as a direct challenge and threat for regional power play.

## THE LIGHT OF ASIA AND THE GREATEST FIGURE IN ASIA

The second layer of engagement began from 1947 till mid-1950s. This was a phase when India established relations with the East as an independent nation. This was the time when Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, described Nehru as the 'Light of Asia' and asserted that Nehru would now play an important role in promoting dignity and freedom of the people of the East. The Nehruvian policy in Indonesia as seen above got him the title of 'The Greatest Figure in Asia'. During the second layer, India's engagement was now built on three paradigms. The first was the Asian Relations Conference of 1947 where extensive personal interactions were done with political leaders. Secondly, the paradigm focused on getting freedom for Indonesia, Burma and the region of Indo-China. Thirdly, there was focus on ensuring that peace and stability was promoted in the region at a time when the Cold War had arrived deep in the East. The third layer was from mid-1950s to 1964. In this period India, being a non-aligned state, was picked up by the UN to resolve the crisis in Korea. The crisis in Korea had begun in 1950 when the northern Korea invaded Southern Korea to unify the Korean peninsula. The



attempt of North was seen by the US as an attempt to impose communism, leading to the US stationing troops in South Korea. On behalf of the UN, India as head of the UN established Korean Commission, peacefully negotiated a settlement between the conflicting Koreas and a boundary was drawn in 1953 as the 38th parallel. In 1954, South Korea and the US signed a mutual defence treaty and became allies while the North drifted towards communism and embraced China. While Philippines became independent in 1946, India became independent in 1947, Burma in 1948, Indonesia in 1949, Malaya in 1957 and Singapore in 1965; all these nations were vulnerable with respect to their external security. They all had to focus on economic restructuring and financial stability to promote growth. This was the time when India decided to use non-alignment to keep the states away from the politics of the Cold War. The things took an unfortunate turn due to Sino-Indian conflict in 1962. The nations of Southeast Asia were in a state of shock and disbelief to see violence used by India and realised that something had gone drastically wrong in India's diplomacy that things reached this level. The change in the perception of Southeast Asians was understandable. This was so because many of the Southeast Asian nations, if not all, after independence had gravitated to adopt a capitalist economic model. Although they were ideologically and personally attached to India, their economic models were at contrast. Also, by early 1960s, the nations of the East were discussing on coming closer to establish an economic platform to deepen their economic ties with each other and also with the rest of the world. This economic platform eventually was born in ASEAN in 1967. The Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 came as an egg on the face for India's eastward engagement because there was a loss of reputation for India and countries became worrisome of hegemonic ambitions of China, thus compelling the nations of the region to look at both India and China in a negative sense. In assessment, Nehru tried to fight colonialism in the East but the roots of colonialism were way too strong for him to realise his vision of Southeast Asia. The intra-Asian rivalries were exploited by the leaders of the Cold War politics and India's lack of economic and military prowess prevented it to play a significant role, thus allowing the Cold War players to immerse themselves with ease. Thus, the factors that Nehru was subject to in realising his dream were international and regional factors and they were beyond his control. The Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 was the final nail in the coffin that ripped apart the diplomatic profile that India had nurtured. Nehru eventually left a legacy that his successors had to now pursue under different circumstances.

## AFTER NEHRU: DID INDIA GET DISCONNECTED IN EASTWARD ENGAGEMENT?

In the previous discussion we saw that while Nehru was one of the chief architects of the modern Indian engagement with Southeast and East Asia but his dream to shape the dynamics of the region the way he wanted were belied. While India was successful in building a narrative of decolonisation in the region, it could not succeed in the narrative of Asian solidarity because there were external cold war factors that hindered India's dream. In the period that followed after the death of Nehru, India was not able to re-connect with the region with the same vigour but also was not completely detached from the region. It did try to remain in touch with major players in the region and continued to react to important developments in the Indo-Pacific. The India-China conflict of 1962 and demise of Nehru in 1964 ultimately ended the developments in the Indo-Pacific. The India-China conflict of 1962 and demise of Nehru in 1964 ultimately ended the era of world politics where foreign policy was dominated by the Prime Minister. The subsequent period after Nehru was followed by internal political struggles. Initially, Lal Bahadur Shastri succeeded Nehru but his tenure was short lived. India at the time of Shastri had faced two full-scale threats from its neighbours and the country was in a state of food insecurity. After the death of Shastri, Indira Gandhi succeeded as the Prime Minister but the senior leaders of the Congress formed a 'syndicate' and tried to develop their own hold over the party and the government, something not amenable with Indira Gandhi. The ongoing internal political struggle led to a split in the Congress in 1969 and eventually Indira Gandhi emerged victorious. Once the internal political struggles were controlled, India now devoted energies under the leadership of Indira Gandhi at the foreign policy level. The first few years of 1970s helped India regain confidence. The successful dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971, peaceful nuclear explosion by India in 1974 and merger of Sikkim in 1975 came dominant foreign policy achievements of the regime. Indira Gandhi and later Rajiv Gandhi continued to engage with Southeast and East Asia based on same principles and tenets as laid down by Nehru. After the death of Nehru, the strategic community in India was now keen to identify countries that supported or sided with Pakistan in the India-Pakistan war of 1965. Singapore was identified as a nation that supported India and same was the case of Malaysia. The tilt of Malaysia towards India was perceived negatively by Pakistan which decided to sever its diplomatic ties with Malaysia but renewed them when Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran acted as a bridge between Malaysia and Pakistan. During this period, Thailand and



Philippines remained neutral while India was deeply irked by the change of stance by its most trusted friend, Indonesia. The Indonesian leadership had been paying multiple visits to Pakistan before the 1965 war and had been comforting Pakistan to wean Kashmir away from India. Indonesia went to the extent of sending secret missions to China to provide Pakistan with military assistance. Indonesian navy chief even stated that Andamans were an extension of Indonesia and India had no right to claim the islands and to put military pressure on India in 1965, even decided to block the access of India to the islands. India realised the rising strategic triangle of Jakarta–Rawalpindi and Beijing and understood the rising security threat that this new strategic triangle could pose. It is important to note that Indonesia displayed such a behaviour owing to certain reasons. Firstly, Indonesia was not comfortable with India's support to independence and formation of Malaysian federation. Secondly, Indonesia and India relationship had been deteriorating post-Bandung Conference and the 1965 war was the final nail in the coffin.

## THE TRIPOD TO QUAD AND INDIA ON POWER VACUUM THEORY

In this backdrop, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi decided to conceptualise an approach towards the East with five key drivers. Firstly, the idea was to offer resistance to great power interventions and military groupings in the region. While offering strong resistance to the Cold War players in the region was an outcome of Nehruvian thinking; the situation now was different. Now, the US and the UK were on a withdrawal mode from the region and there were rising fears that China could step in and fill the vacuum left. Intellectually, the scholarly community began to articulate that as the US and the UK retreat, the space in the Southeast and East Asia should not be filled by China but by India, Japan and Australia. It is interesting to note that this tripod that was being argued for the region of Indo-Pacific saw a manifestation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD). India was not immune from the discussions regarding the power vacuum theory but was clear that it would not be keen to join any military-centric alliance for regional security. India had categorically rejected the power vacuum theory and stated that it would support any endeavour which focused on nationalism, regional economic cooperation and building of strength and capabilities. India placed a lot of emphasis on nationalism because it stated that the European had to shun colonialism in Asia and Southeast Asia not because of any altruism or caprice but because of rising presence of Asian nationalism. This is why India asserted that this power vacuum theory was nothing but a continuation of colonial outlook by the West in another garb. In 1968, in her visit to Southeast Asia, India offered a nationalistic narrative in contrast to the power vacuum theory. It stated that the Southeast Asians and Indians must come together to forge a common understanding on regional cooperation and economic development and growth. India was not in favour of any security or military dimension in regional cooperation because it explained that India was already busy with its own troubles by its neighbours. It stated that it has already deployed its troops in managing its own boundaries and any deployment of forces outside its immediate territory would not only weaken its own defences but also unnecessarily provoke others, thus creating greater tensions in the area when India was striving for regional peace.

## INDIA'S REGIONAL COOPERATION STRATEGIC THINKING AND INDIA'S ASEAN DILEMMA

In the above framework of mind, India decided to approach the idea of formation of ASEAN in 1967. It is important to note that ASEAN was not the first grouping that the Southeast Asians tried to materialise. They had tried to make unsuccessful attempts earlier and Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) was one in 1961 and the other was Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines (MAPHILINDO) Federation in 1963. However, in 1967, Indira Gandhi sent Indian Foreign Minister on a tour to Southeast Asia. During his trip, the Minister officially outlined India's thinking and he stated that India would be happy to open trade and commerce-centric cooperation with Singapore, as demanded. Also, India would be happy to support a regional economic cooperation initiative if other states wanted and even clarified that India would also be equally satisfied in staying out if the other states did not demand so. In any case, India asserted that it had no interests in dominating any regional grouping. The Southeast Asian nations in 1967 were witnessing subversion by communist China and very visibly upset at such interference. India was almost in a dilemma on how to welcome the creation of ASEAN because the founding members had come together to create a group that was only for non-communist states. Though India happily shared the value of peace and stability that ASEAN stood for, but it failed to articulate an effective response because India knew that ASEAN was being backed by the Americans and any attempt by India to align itself during the Cold War with



ASEAN could damage its credentials of non-alignment. The reason why India was actually in a dilemma was because India wanted the US as a power in the region as the US was the only effective bulwark against the subversion of China, but being proximate to Soviet Union, India could not officially take such a stand publicly. Even if we look within ASEAN, Indonesia, which was one of the founding members of ASEAN was not keen to have India as a member because it saw India as a rival in its own regional ambitions which it wanted to materialise in ASEAN. In this backdrop, when ASEAN was officially formed in August 1967, there was no invitation extended to India. India's idea of a regional organisation was very different. Firstly, India in 1960s had accepted that regional cooperation was not a remote idea anymore. This was quite contrast to India's stand on regional cooperation because since Nehruvian times, India had a firm belief that only a global platform like the UN would significant in a turbulent post-World War. Secondly, India in 1960s clarified its own vision of how it saw regional cooperation. After accepting the idea of regional cooperation as a diplomatic necessity of the times, India clarified that a regional grouping should complement development in the member states, engage on basis of mutual benefit and equality and not have any political undertones or military undertones. This was significant because India was not keen on having a grouping that would emerge with camp follower leanings or become satellites of bigger power. Thirdly, in reference to ASEAN, India stated that it would welcome a broad-based regional grouping that would have economic and developmental agenda as core binder and would prefer the name to be 'Asian Council' or 'Council of Asia', as that would imply a more inclusive meaning. This point was significant because India wanted to, in a subtle way, discourage an American-backed ASEAN and were in favour of recasting ASEAN as an inclusive grouping. In 1973, ASEAN created ZOPFAN or Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality and this, to some extent, did reduce India's dilemma if relating itself to ASEAN because the ASEAN through ZOPFAN tried to position itself as an organisation independent of American thinking. By ZOPFAN, the ASEAN also effectively asserted a greater independence from the US, dominance of the Chinese and displayed opposition to any form of military approach for regional security. India showed tremendous appreciation for the ZOPFAN initiative of ASEAN because the idea was in sync with Indian efforts to establish a zone of peace in Indian Ocean. While India definitely did not succeed in achieving its version of ASEAN during the Cold War, but when the Cold War ended, ASEAN eventually expanded, added communist nations, autocratic nations and conceptualised the East Asia Summit (EAS) as a regional grouping. All these developments in ASEAN since the end of the Cold War added credibility to India's approach in the long-run and enabled the members of ASEAN to deepen engagement with India effectively since the end of the Cold War. In essence, one can assert that India's idea of regionalism and sub-regionalism was based on common interests that would bring people together. India never envisaged regionalism which contradicted nationalism or internationalism but supported any instrument of regional diplomacy which came up as a genuine and legitimate instrument of cooperation. After all the ups and downs, India, as seen with respect to its ASEAN diplomacy, was well-placed in the Indo-Pacific region after the death of Nehru. India's regional cooperation diplomatic posturing and its ASEAN policy helped India consolidate its bilateral relationships with Singapore, Vietnam, Japan and South Korea during the Cold War. With Rajiv Gandhi trying to normalise relations with China, the stage was set for India to take advantage of the regional economic dynamism. When the Cold War ended, India was ready to integrate with region economically and strategically.





# 2

## CHAPTER

# Streamlining and Restructuring India's Eastward Engagement and India's Look East Policy

## THE CHANGE OF FOREIGN POLICY DISCOURSE AND MYSTERY AROUND LOOK EAST POLICY

In the previous chapter, we have analysed that India's engagement with Southeast and East Asia, after the death of Nehru had become ad hoc, reactive and unfolding in a differentiated manner based on a country-wise approach. Since the end of the Cold War, India's eastward engagement was given a new direction under the term Look East Policy (LEP). While the term LEP was credited to Narsimha Rao, the larger concern was on how did the term come into usage? There were different schools of thought that explained the different originations of LEP. One school of thought argued that the term was used in 1992 when Southeast and East Asia found a new presence in the discourse of Ministry of External Affairs. This view was even endorsed by the then Secretary in the Ministry, A. N. Ram. However, a considerable scholarship argued that the term LEP was used by Narsimha Rao when he delivered a lecture in Singapore on 8th September 1994 and since then began the articulation of the term. This school argued that the term LEP was eventually used in the annual reports of the Ministry of External Affairs of 1995–1996 and this was a justification that Rao brought about this shift in the orientation in policy thinking. At this juncture, it must be mentioned that when Rao delivered his lecture in 1994 in Singapore, he never used the term Look East Policy. The absence of usage of such a term and its subsequent use in annual report of the ministry the next year again created a mystery on who actually coined the term. The former foreign secretary of India, Salman Haidar, gave his own opinion. As per his argument, the term LEP was a cut-off slogan that was devised by ministry officials for the visit of Rao to South Korea in 1993. He argued that when the Prime Minister visited Seoul, there was a need felt in the ministry to have a catchy phrase that would give a distinctive focus to his journey to Southeast and East Asia and set the visit to the region as a pioneer visit, in contrast to other visits around the globe. In this view, the term LEP was thus a deliberate inversion of long dominated westward direction of Indian policy making.

## ECONOMIC CONTEXTUALISATION OF LOOK EAST POLICY

The LEP was brought in during the 1990s and this period saw uncertainties and anxieties because of rapidly changing global and domestic environment. Globally, the Soviet Union had disintegrated, the Cold War came to an end and the military-bloc politics that had dominated the international discourse came to an end. The onset of globalisation presented the Southeast Asian economies as the new rising jewels of the region. While the ending of the Cold War did open up new opportunities for the Indian foreign policy, India also had constraints in managing the post-Cold War world order because India was now left with only a unipolar US. India, during the Cold War, with its tilt towards the Soviet Union, saw a shrinking global environment. In this sense, it was imperative for India to redefine not only the old strategic relationships but also discover and identify new friends. Domestically, India was witnessing economic and political crisis. The foreign exchange reserves of India were depleting at a time when the country was politically unstable. The wave of globalisation was gradually weighing heavily on the inward looking Indian economy and India was in dire need of economic reforms, which were eventually initiated by Manmohan Singh, the then Finance Minister of Rao government. In pursuance of this domestic situation, India decided to go for opening up its economy and seek investments, trade support and technology



to boost economic growth. The LEP, in this sense, had been seen by many scholars as an economic initiative that would be a driver of India's own economic growth. However, this is not true because the LEP was not just driven by economic considerations but also strategic considerations. Let us examine how the strategic considerations drove the LEP.

## STRATEGIC LEANINGS OF INDIA'S LOOK EAST POLICY

The next bigger challenge for India was China. China, since 1949, had a closed economy and followed communism. In 1979, the Chinese began to change their orientation and started to tilt towards capitalism. The various factors attributed to the shift in the Chinese outlook were a part of discipline of world history and beyond the purview of this book, it was imperative to note that one of the core factors was power. The Chinese and Soviet Union were locked in a perpetual power contestation since 1950s and the contest was that who would be the leader of the communist world. While the Soviet Union wanted to assert their supremacy in leading the global communism, the Chinese felt that they were frontrunners for the same. This power contestation eventually led the Chinese to come out of the embrace of communism and join hands with the US during the Cold War. In 1970s, the Chinese joined hands with the US and tried to checkmate Soviet by drastically increasing their own power. Since 1978, when China was led by Deng Xiaoping, the state made a turn towards a capitalist-based growth model. The Americans were eager to assist the Chinese because initially they thought that if Chinese were supported, then the Americans could weaken the Cold War by checkmating Soviet. Secondly, the Americans aided the Chinese growth because they were of the belief that in the long run, the Chinese would eventually embrace democracy in the future. However, the only thing that eventually happened was that the Chinese hugged the Americans tightly, took out all capitalist support, enhanced their economic and military power to the extent that they developed global power ambition to now undercut the US as the sole superpower in the world. When the Cold War ended, the biggest challenge for India was not just on how to adjust in a world which was a unipolar world led by the US but also how to adjust to an economically powerful China in the neighbourhood and an economically assertive China in the region. The third worry for India was the growing military relations between China, Pakistan and Myanmar. India was of the belief that there appeared to be a deliberate attempt by the Chinese to militarily arm India's neighbours as this would allow Chinese the space to keep India bogged down in regional affairs while having a clean space to explore for global power ascendancy. The countries in Southeast and East Asia were also alarmed to see the rise of China and were concerned that the Chinese were likely to resort to aggressive posturing in the region in future. In this backdrop, the smaller countries in the region such as Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia decided that they must open up deeper engagement with India as they believed that India can be an effective regional strategic option. Thus, India, during the Cold War was not perceived as a prominent player in the region by many was now seen as a player that could strategically balance the power equations in the region. Thus, a clear analysis helped us to understand that LEP was not just economic but also had strategic overtones. The compulsion of the government to announce the LEP was a comprehensive and systematic approach which was nothing but a continuation of previous approaches. The LEP was, in this sense, a re-casted and redefined thinking as per new and emerging trends in strategic environment. Thus, the strategic impetus to the LEP was driven by three factors, the rise of China, its attempt to militarise India's neighbours to bog down India regionally and transformation of ASEAN states to use India as a balancer.

### How did India Strategically Manage China under the Look East Policy?

Since 1988, when Rajiv Gandhi paid a visit to China, the successive governments, even though at times with different political complexions, have tried to manage Chinese through a coherent strategy. India has tried to maintain peace and tranquillity with China while engaging with other countries in Southeast and East Asia to strengthen its economic and strategic profile. India has ensured that it strived for balancing rivalry and always used incentives for good behaviour with China. The hardest task in Indian diplomacy in managing Chinese has been to carefully articulate balance as it manages the competition, cooperation and rivalries.

## ARTICULATION OF INDIA'S LOOK EAST POLICY: FUSING STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

With the changing domestic and international environment, India now embarked upon the role of establishing relations in the East on a firm footing. The cognitive thinking of Narsimha Rao was driven by two factors. Firstly, Rao wanted that



### Maharaja Diplomacy

In 1992, India sent the former Maharaja of Jaipur to court the Sultan of Brunei. This is because both the individuals had a close rapport and India wanted to use the personal proximity as a bridge between India and Brunei. The Maharaja reached Brunei and often played polo matches with Sultan and build up a bridge of oil diplomacy between India and Brunei.

### Why Myanmar became the Fulcrum of India's Look East Policy?

Myanmar, in 1990s, was transitioning to democracy but the Tatmadaw acquired power. This led the Chinese and Pakistanis to court the Tatmadaw. The Pakistanis began to supply arms to insurgents in Indian Northeast from Myanmar while the Chinese established listening posts to keep a check on India's military movements in Northeast. In this backdrop, India realised that cooperative and congenial relationship with the Tatmadaw was essential not just for India's outreach to the Southeast and the East Asia under the LEP but also to effectively manage India's internal security concerns in the Northeast. India thus adopted a new Myanmar policy which was based on two fundamental thoughts. Firstly, it would extend moral and political support to the supporters of democracy in Myanmar; and secondly, it would envisage a relationship with the military regime, thereby accepting the new geo-political realities and yet maintaining a value-based foreign policy.

India's domestic economic situation must improve and for this, building an economic engagement with the world in general and the Southeast and the East Asia was imminent. Secondly, Rao wanted to ensure that India had a multi-dimensional level of engagement with the East and this manifested in the thought that India would engage at the multilateral level (meaning India would deepen engagement with ASEAN) and bilateral levels with the Southeast and the East Asia. India was very keen to open up engagement with ASEAN because it was inspired by their model of development and were keen to emulate the economic policy, procedures and delivery systems of ASEAN. However, India was also very clear of the thought that investing strength in the bilateral relationships in the region with mutually beneficial content would advance India's policy. This is why Rao decided to place a significant interest in engaging with Indian diaspora, not just in the Southeast and the East Asia, but also abroad. Rao placed emphasis on engaging with influential Indian community which comprised of Indian intellectuals and academicians, which today under Modi government have been broadened to include the Indian public at large. In 1994, when Narsimha Rao addressed a lecture in Singapore, he made it clear to articulate the relevance of the region for India. He began his lecture by stating the economic reforms India had domestically undertaken and reforms that were envisaged. He explained the gathering that their investments in India were not only help the money grow but their investments would help a billion Indian people to grow. Narsimha Rao tried to link the economic investments with social investment because he stated that if Indian people grow, then these people would act as a force of stability in Asia-Pacific. The facts also justify the thinking envisaged in the LEP. From 1991 to 1994, approximately 20% of the total foreign investment that flowed into India came from the region of Asia-Pacific. India decided to utilise majority of the investments from abroad to create infrastructure, which would become fulcrum of India's growth story. Thus, India was not just positioned as a vast market and a reliable partner but the involvement of investments in Indian development story were to usher in a renaissance of a great and noble civilisation. It is equally important to note that the LEP was well aware of the strategic challenges that were likely to arise in the region of Asia-Pacific. India clearly articulated that while the Cold War had ended, the Cold War attitude still persisted and the persistence has nothing to do with inevitability of such thoughts but the fact that removal of such thoughts was a time taking process. India was aware that once the US became a unipolar power and Chinese rose in Asia, the region of Asia-Pacific was likely to witness a new confrontation. The confrontation would no more be ideological in the post-Cold War because the Cold War had dismantled the ideological diaphragms. But the confrontation would be over the new centre of economic gravity, that is Asia-Pacific. In this sense, India articulated under its LEP thinking that the region would witness challenges pertaining to security of waterways, piracy, navigational challenges, disputes over colonial islands, maritime zones and resources. This is because these disputes had existed in the region historically and they had been defused many times but never dispelled and were likely to reoccur. In this backdrop, India had clearly articulated that the nation would also play a crucial role in maintaining peace, security and stability. India also clearly mentioned that in no way India was asserting that it would have any expansionist role in the region and nor would like to alter regional security. This is because India's sole concern was to focus more on its regional defence, Indian Ocean region, but not shy away to exercise a prominent role in global affairs if needed. It is important to note why India had to make a statement to clarify that it had no expansionist mindset. In 1971, during the India-Pakistan war, the US tried to intimidate India by sending a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, USS Enterprise, in the Bay of Bengal. The Soviet was effectively able to defuse the existential crisis upon India during the course of war but the event had set alarm bells ringing in Indian security establishment. An immediate need was felt, after the war, to rebuild Indian naval forces.



India embarked upon massive naval modernisation and this had raised suspicions in the Southeast Asians who thought that India was developing a naval force with an expansionist mindset. This, however, was never the case. India only wanted a naval force that would secure its own regional defence and wanted to engage with other nations without endangering anyone's security. The role envisaged by India would always be devoid of any military alliance or multilateralism but one where India would be able to determine its own destiny, its own national interests and ensure international consensus on matters that confront the world. India's estimation of strategic challenges in the Asia-Pacific region were apt and today, in the 21st century, the region is actually witnessing every challenge which India had articulated in the LEP.

## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIA'S LOOK EAST POLICY

The discussion above clearly helps us to understand that India's relationship with the Southeast and the East Asia improved due to various factors. The initiation of the LEP was not a knee-jerk event because the global strategic environment had a crucial role to play. The Cold War had ended, the US was withdrawing from the region, there was rising China and apprehensions amongst the regional nations of a possible Chinese dominance. In this backdrop, the regional players were also inclined to look elsewhere and India, with which these states had historical and civilisational ties since antiquity, was a crucial player to ensure supremacy of a harmonious regional balance. India was envisaged as an important player in the regional thinking. As explained, India too decided to look at the region for its growth and an attempt to expand its global footprint, which till now had been constrained owing to the Cold War. The member states in the region not only decided to work with India economically (which was a core dimension of India's national interest) but also they envisaged to work with India in the arena of security and defence interoperability (an arena of national interest of many Southeast and East Asian nations). Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia and Laos emerged as leaders in embracing a security relationship with India and consequently a host of defence exercises, defence training and deeper security cooperation opened up. In 2004, in a significant departure from its long standing policy, India even allowed Singapore to have access to Indian training facilities at the Air Force and Army levels under the bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement (signed in 2003). The security and defence relationships between India and the region were more intensified and institutionalised and this was over and above the deepening economic relations under the LEP. In this sense, one thing was clear that India's engagement with the East would not have been possible had the regional states not showed an equal inclination to engage with India. Thus, India's LEP can be seen to have gone through phases of exploration, articulation and pursuance of engagement. The first phase of exploration and articulation lasted till the end of the decade.

The phase of pursuance of engagement was given a new shape with the coming of the NDA government in 1998. On 29th September 2003, the Indian External Minister, Yashwant Sinha, in a speech at Harvard University explained the new phase of engagement. He stated that in the phase of exploration and articulation, India's prime focus on looking at the East was trade, investment and security linkages. He further explained that under the NDA regime, an attempt had been made to widen the definition of 'East' and the fulcrum now defined was from Myanmar to Australia, having ASEAN at the core. Sinha asserted that in this widened geographical outlook of the LEP, the focus was on not just economic cooperation but also building joint capacities to tackle emerging strategic concerns such as protection of sea lanes of communication and counter-terrorism. In this new approach now outlined, the focus was on engaging with Australia to build a regional grouping in the Indian Ocean Region. The idea of India in conceptualising such an organisation was preventive in nature. This means that the idea was to prevent any bigger power to dominate the Indian Ocean region by ensuring that India took the lead and secured its own stakes in the region. It is also important to note that counter-terrorism entered into the policy discourse of India's LEP because of the altered global security environment caused due to the 9/11. The 9/11 had brought India and the US closer at the security levels and the US had finally accepted that terrorism was a global menace, something which India had been asserting since long. Thus, by bringing the US under its embrace successfully, India tried to use the American engagement to deepen ties with American allies such as Australia, Japan and South Korea.

## CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC UNDER INDIA'S EASTWARD POLICIES

As the relations with the US were not just confined to economic matters but also security and defence; India decided to deepen ties with the US and develop credible capabilities to manage security in the Indian Ocean. At the security level,



India had integrated itself well with the region and it was a participating state in ASEAN Regional Forum (a platform for security and defence cooperation) and ADMM Plus (ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Forum). India's attempts to position itself as a Net Security Provider (see the meaning in the next sentence) have helped its evolving defence diplomacy. Under the LEP, India is today focusing on assistance and supplies of defence equipment, ensuring safety and security in the region by resorting to direct deployment tasks (meaning of Net Security Provider), resort to participation in defence exercises (with a potential for future defence sales of military equipment) and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). The larger security diplomacy of India as visible in its LEP is driven by two factors. The first is to counter terrorism and piracy in the region and the second is to ensure that the region is free and stable for navigation. At the level of terrorism, while every nation might have differing national priorities on how to view terrorism, but there appears a general consensus that radicalisation and terrorist violence must be nipped in the bud. The countries in the region of Indo-Pacific and India have a broad consensus that freedom of navigation must remain central policy of security engagements. India is gradually working to evolve a security architecture where Indo-Pacific is free, open, plural, flexible and where ASEAN remains the bedrock.

## ASSESSMENT OF INDIA'S LOOK EAST POLICY

As the LEP evolved from exploration, articulation and pursuance, one thing is clear that India was able to renew, reactivate and reinforce the relations with the Southeast and the East Asia. The intensification of political dialogue was an ample demonstration of successes achieved by India. The bilateral ties with players in the region had acquired myriad facets ranging from cooperation in diverse areas such as fisheries to defence to space technology to combating international terrorism. However, when we make an assessment of India's LEP in the region, we see that India's relationship unfolded in a way that can be described as a 'differentiated engagement'. This term means that when India engaged with the region, there were different drivers in everywhere that ranged from security, economic and strategic. Thus, a coherent engagement was not seen across the region. For instance, an assessment of the LEP tells us that India's engagement could be identified across three or four categories.

Category 1	India's engagement with the Southeast Asia region
Category 2	India's engagement with the Indo-China region
Category 3	India's engagement with the East Asia region
Category 4	India's engagement with the ASEAN region

India created a separate unit in the Ministry of External Affairs for deepening engagement with countries in the Indo-China region. The countries in this region included Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar. These countries were geographically proximate to India and not as Westernised as other nations in the Southeast and the East Asia. Also, these countries were closer to the Soviet Union during the Cold War and thus India had a different idea of engagement with these states. The most important gain for India in LEP was engagement with ASEAN. In 1992, India became a sectoral dialogue partner with ASEAN and identified trade, investment, tourism and science and technology as core areas of cooperation. Eventually, India progressed later to become a full dialogue partner and this enabled India to deepen cooperation in the four areas identified above. The US had worked quietly behind the scenes to enable the rise of India in ASEAN. In 2002, India and ASEAN Annual Summit was finally institutionalised and now India was able to lay down new areas of cooperation, innovative delivery mechanisms and methods and accord special priority down the line with ASEAN. The member states of ASEAN found a congruence of shared interests with India. The sophisticated diplomacy of India, its regional security imperatives outlined for the Southeast and the East Asia juxtaposed the regional security environment and thus ASEAN and India became natural partners. The key to India's success in engaging with the region is its ability to persuade the regional partners that India is a non-threatening and a supportive nation. This voluntary acceptance of Indian posturing is an achievement of Indian diplomacy and this delicate fruit will require sensitive and careful nurturing in the decades ahead. India's approach to LEP is also visible in its search for institutional integration beyond ASEAN and this has manifested in Indian diplomacy in BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Initiative for Technical and Economic Cooperation), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and East Asian Summit (EAS).



## INDIA AND BIMSTEC, MEKONG–GANGA COOPERATION AND EAST ASIAN SUMMIT DIPLOMACY

The BIMSTEC was conceptualised by Thailand when they announced their Look West Policy and envisaged a connect with South Asian states to boost economic integration. The organisation, owing to political and economic factors, had not been able to perform well but India was trying to re-energise the BIMSTEC and wanted to position it as a parallel to SAARC, which apparently had become defunct due to Pakistani refusal to go ahead with initiatives of regional connectivity and abandon use of terrorism as state policy. In November 2000, the Mekong–Ganga Cooperation was formed with India representing the Ganga basin and Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam representing the Mekong basin. The idea was to envisage a regional grouping which strengthens the civilisational and historical connect and harness economic potential. The other countries of ASEAN which were not members of the MGC had welcomed it because it focused on building a strong regional economic and strategic culture by emphasising diplomacy around tourism, culture, education, transport and communication. The idea of EAS was proposed in 1990 by the Malaysian Prime Minister Mohammad Mahathir in presence of Chinese premier Li Peng. Mahathir proposed creation of an East Asia Economic Group (EAEG) akin to trading blocs established by the West. It eventually concretised in 2005 as EAS when the Kuala Lumpur Declaration was finally signed. The EAS has a wide spread geographical membership and includes India, the USA and even China. The idea of inviting India and the US was of Japan and Singapore who wanted to ensure that EAS is not dominated by the Chinese. The EAS, BIMSTEC and MGC have no conflict with ASEAN and are normally seen as part of a broader regional economic and strategic architecture with ASEAN at core driving force. The trade between India and ASEAN had prospered after India and ASEAN signed the Free Trade Agreements in Goods (2009) and Services (2014) and India–ASEAN Investment Agreement (2014).

### Hurdles in India and ASEAN Trade Diplomacy

Even though trade has prospered between India and ASEAN, the shortfall is attributed to a few factors. Firstly, from Indian side the biggest barrier is non-tariff barriers, procedures and trade-related paperwork. From ASEAN side, the biggest hurdle is connectivity. India must enhance the domestic business environment, reduce corruption, improve performance on rule of law, provide speedier project clearances, boost manufacturing, simplify tax procedures, focus on easing FDI norms, promote awareness of its domestic cities in ASEAN states and be more flexible with Public–Private Partnership contracts.



# 3

## CHAPTER

# India's Act East Policy, RCEP Diplomacy and Stand on South China Sea Dispute

## THE ACT EAST POLICY: INDIA'S SEVENTH WAVE OF EASTWARD ENGAGEMENT

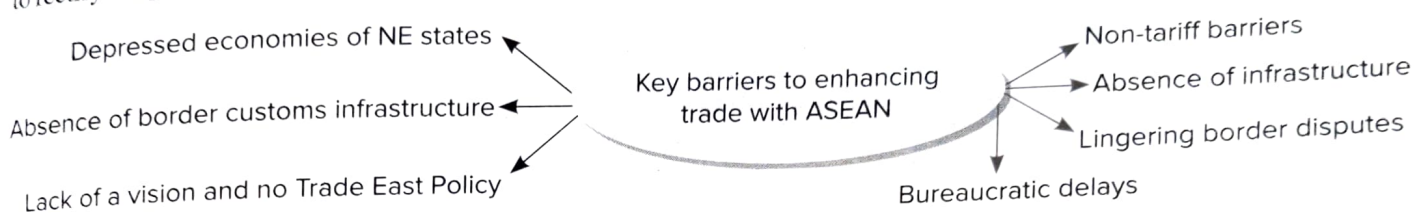
In the preceding chapters we had seen that India's eastward engagement can be seen through seven waves and in that context, the Act East Policy (AEP) is the seventh phase. The AEP was announced by Prime Minister Modi on 12th November 2014 during the opening remarks of the India-ASEAN Summit in Myanmar. The Indian Prime Minister asserted that India was witnessing a new era of economic development, industrialisation and trade and in this context, the India's Look East Policy is now the Act East Policy. The Prime Minister asserted that India has decided, under the AEP, to push a great sense of priority in engaging with the East and the East Asia Summit was now identified as an important pillar in the new thinking. In this context, it is important to note that in the previous chapter we saw that India under the LEP had identified the ASEAN as a central pillar and under the new AEP, the fulcrum was the EAS. At this juncture it is equally important to note that India did not announce the AEP on 12th November 2014 but had been dropping prior hints. In 2014, prior to the India-ASEAN Summit, the Indian External Affairs Minister had travelled to Vietnam and she too had asserted that India's visit to Seoul was a part of India's intention to 'Act East'. This proposition was later elaborated by the official spokesperson of the Indian MEA when he stated that the term 'Act East' means 'Action', 'Dynamism' and 'Proactive India'. Later, the Prime Minister in the India-ASEAN Summit, officially announced the policy. The AEP was now the flagship policy of the government and India was now moving Eastward under the AEP at a wider level through a highly multi dimensional and action-oriented policy architecture. The policy was also elaborated by the officials of the MEA in 2015-16. The officials stated that AEP was a continuum of the LEP and was now beyond the traditional dimension of ASEAN, the focus of LEP has acquired strategic, political and cultural dimensions to leverage opportunities for peace, prosperity and security. They even argued that the objective of the policy was to leave a larger Indian imprint in the region and complement the regional approaches of security with an intention to integrate their approaches to our security and strategic agendas. The policy was given three objectives namely political-security, economic and cultural diplomacy (with an aim to leverage Hindu-Buddhist links). The AEP was to drive India's deepening engagement with ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), EAS, BIMSTEC, MCG and Indian Ocean Rim Association.

## CORE PILLARS OF INDIA'S ACT EAST POLICY

The AEP focuses on integrating India's Northeast with neighbouring countries of the region. It intends to go beyond ASEAN centrality, which has been achieved by the LEP, and focus on the realm of Indo-Pacific by including other regional and multilateral organisations. The AEP is also not just purely commercial- and economic-centric but also intends to deepen cultural, people-to-people ties, civilisational links and more importantly, political-strategic cooperation. The hyphenation of political-strategic in the policy needs elaboration. This means that India will not only be a net provider of security in Indo-Pacific but will also set the agenda and strategy for being a net security provider at the highest political level (Prime Minister's level). This is also a reflection of how India intends to cooperate at security level in Indo-Pacific through a democratic thinking. A close look at the pillars of the AEP clearly tell us that the changes in the AEP from the old LEP



are more quantitative than qualitative. This means that firstly, the only thing that the AEP has done is to focus more on continuity with a new name than bring about any thematic changes. In the previous chapter, we analysed at length how the LEP was conceptualised by Narsimha Rao with economic focus and NDA government added another layer to the LEP with a strategic focus. In fact, the two layers of the LEP had already captured the larger Indian thought on engagement Eastwards. The LEP had focused on the connectivity and people-to-people ties but never made an official statement of the same and nor did ever highlight the religious dimension. While the AEP has highlighted the religious dimension, it has focused on Hindu–Buddhist civilisational links and has ignored Islam. While it is true that Islam did not originate in India and has been absorbed in India with Deobandi, Sufi and Barelvi strands as syncretic strands; but so is the case with Buddhism, which actually originated in Nepal and not India. By omission of Islam in the AEP, some concerns have been raised and India is finding it difficult to have an all-encompassing engagement in Indo-Pacific. This is so because Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei are dominant regional players and they feel neglected by India's AEP. The Indian Prime Minister tried to rectify the policy inadequacy by paying a visit to Istiqlal Mosque in Indonesia and Chulia Mosque in Singapore in 2018.



## ACT EAST POLICY: NEW INITIATIVE OR RE-PACKAGED INITIATIVE?

Many Indian scholars have been trying to label the AEP as a brand new initiative of the government while some argue that the initiative is a re-packaged LEP and has nothing new to offer. While the previous analysis in this chapter does point out that there have been natural elements of continuity in the AEP, but it will also be wrong to assert that no new change was visible when India transitioned from LEP to AEP. The LEP did achieve a lot of intended outcomes but was falling short of trade and investment targets. At the levels of connectivity, even countries of Indo-Pacific agreed that India was creating a delivery deficit. In this sense, a need arose for India to reassert its role in the region and the AEP was Indian answer that outlined Indian vision to play a more constructive and meaningful regional role. The urge to change the name in 2014, in this sense, was based on a strong desire of the new government, to differentiate its foreign policy approaches from that of the predecessor governments. However, it has also been argued that the change in the name of the policy was not a major factor because there is no evidence of any systematic discussion in Indian foreign policy establishment circles for the name change. Many officials of the Indian MEA accept that there has been no beforehand assessment of implications of name change. This is evident from the fact that the Annual Report of MEA of 2014–15 also argues that with AEP, India wanted to generally convey that it would have to be more active and effective in tackling the rise and assertion of China while trying to be pragmatic in concretising cooperation at political, economic, strategic and cultural levels with the Southeast and the East Asia. The period of 2014 to 2022–2023 of AEP does see an active and intensive political engagement of India in Indo-Pacific region. This engagement is driven by India's new great self-confidence where at the foreign policy level, India aspires to be a leading power and not just a balancing power. It intends to shoulder greater global responsibilities. This new approach has been even noticed by the Chinese and Chinese think-tanks have often stated that India is now more vibrant, assertive and has a higher risk-taking ability. A personal rapport is built through intensive high level visits now. Besides visits, regular discussion on issues of mutual interests have now been institutionalised. In 2016, India institutionalised the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) that now constitutes a Pacific community. Secondly, there is a thrust by India to invite Singapore and Japan to create infrastructure in India's Northeast. Simultaneously, India is working with private sector to create manufacturing hubs in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. The initiatives such as Kaladan Multimodal Project and India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral highway have to be seen in this context. Domestically, there has been a concerted attempt to neutralise the insurgent groups and the Naga Peace Framework is a testimony to stabilisation efforts. The linking of India's Northeast under the AEP has to be seen in the larger context of regional initiatives such as Security and Growth for All (SAGAR) and India's mega port infrastructure initiative known as Sagarmala. The idea of the AEP is to link India's Northeast as a land-bridge to ASEAN and use the Indo-China nations to stabilise Northeast so that it can emerge as vibrant

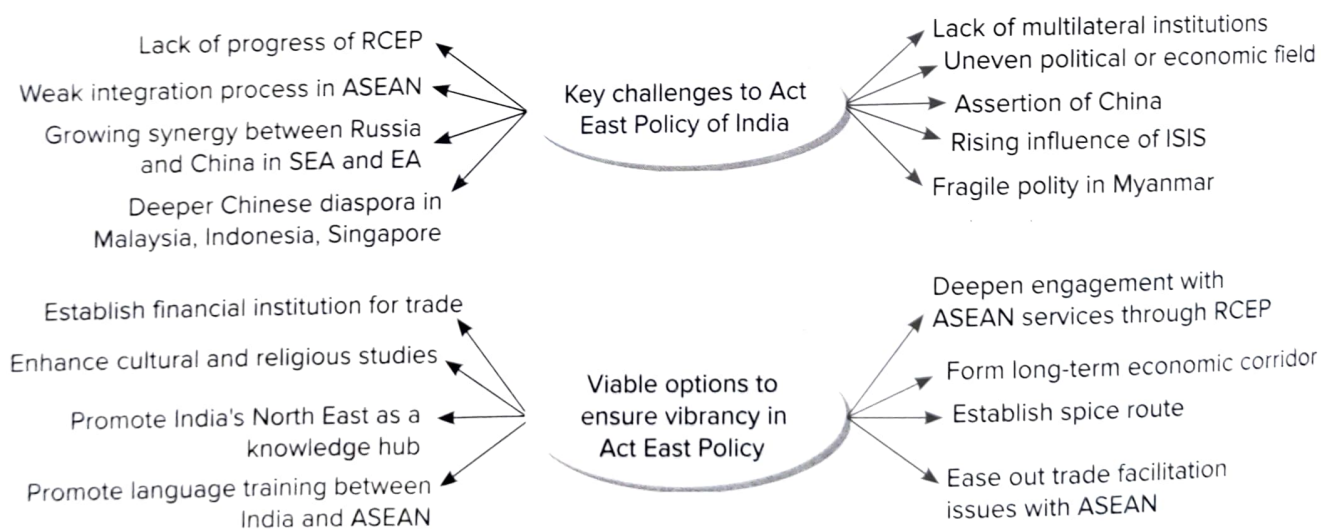


### How does India define a strategic partnership?

Indian concept of the term strategic partnership is not how Europeans and West normally define it. In Indian foreign policy, the term is more generically used to signify economic, political, defence, security, technological and civilisational ties. In any case, Indian conception of strategic partnership is not a formal alliance but an urge to deepen ties at a privileged level.

economic hub. Under the AEP, India is also encouraging the neighbouring countries to open consulates in Guwahati, a city which forms fulcrum of Indian AEP. In this backdrop, the government of Assam has also set up an 'Act East Ministry' at the State government level and is pursuing the objective of deepening culture, commerce and connectivity. New centres to study Southeast Asian studies have now been opened in Assam to create a new culture of academic and intellectual debate under the AEP. Similarly, at the security level, the AEP has not just continued with security paradigms and architecture created under the LEP, but also deepened and expanded cooperation in security wherever possible. India has adopted a multi-path strategy to achieve this. Firstly, it has decided to reinforce and upgrade the strategic partnerships with the countries in Indo-Pacific. Under the AEP, the strategic partnerships have been reinforced with Australia, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia. An important aspect of India's growing security cooperation, apart from strategic partnerships, under the AEP, is India's participation in QUAD and Indo-Pacific, as counter responses to the Belt and Road Initiative and Maritime Silk Route. The third element of India's security dimension of AEP is India's willingness to sell military weapons to Philippines in 2021 as an attempt to deepen the defence ties. A vital aspect in this new diplomacy of India is centrality of 'Make in India' where India envisages

itself as a reliable supplier of defence products, made in India, to various nations, so that they develop capacities to tackle regional security challenges. India today looks at Indo-Pacific nations as an important market for India's growing defence products. The fourth element of security under AEP is India's willingness to counter-terrorism, though an element of LEP, but in a new way. Under the AEP, India is trying to look at countering terrorism by mobilising support from Indo-Pacific nations to contain the threats of cross-border terrorism and also build a larger consensus to tackle threats by jihadi tanzems to security of India and the Indo-Pacific. This is implemented under the AEP through deepening cooperation in information sharing, intelligence sharing, law enforcement-based cooperation and building of security capacities under the existing architectures laid down by the ASEAN. In this backdrop, the fifth element is maritime security with a thrust on freedom of navigation, in general, and South China Sea in focus. At the bilateral and multilateral forums, India is now more vocal on ensuring that it is able to express concerns related to Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea, the issue will be elaborated in the next segment.



## INDIA'S RCEP DIPLOMACY UNDER THE ACT EAST POLICY

One of the major thrusts of the AEP has been deeper economic integration with the region at trade and investment levels. In 2011, the ASEAN countries had conceptualised the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and India too joined the discussions. In the same year, a framework for evolution of the RCEP was adopted by the negotiating parties. The RCEP was envisaged as a modern, comprehensive, high-quality agreement which will be mutually beneficial to forge



economic partnerships by achieving a balanced instrument to boost trades in goods, services and investments. The RCEP was also an ambitious project because it decided to bring India, Japan and China on a regional forum in a single regional trading agreement that would be the largest trading bloc in the world. The RCEP was given a tremendous amount of centrality in negotiations by players of ASEAN because it was a step in realising the ASEAN economic community vision. Since 2014, India decided that under its AEP, it would negotiate in the RCEP because India would get an opportunity to expand and diversify its exports markets and become a part of regional value chains. As the agreement was about to be enforced, India decided to back out of the RCEP. RCEP was the world's most ambitious trade proposal comprising 16 states (10 members of ASEAN and 6 FTA partners). It brings together India, China and Japan, the three largest economies in Asia along with ASEAN members and South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Once established as an agreement with sixteen chapters, it shall be the largest trading bloc in the world with a trade area covering 49% of global population and a 22 trillion USD combined GDP. It will truly make Asia the factory of the world, a genuine reflection of the Asian century. More importantly, it will address the 'noodle bowl' syndrome by reducing the overlap amongst the FTA's operating in Asia. The international multilateral trade is in flux today. The Americans who established the global trading system and nurtured the free and liberal trade today feel victims of their own creation. As the WTO remains sluggish to prove its stature, it is the regional trade agreements that have emerged a new game in the town, thus the RCEP. As RCEP is a mixture of wealthy states, large economies and low-income economies, all of which have different visions of world trade, it is indeed difficult to achieve a consensus on the basics of a free trade agreement. There has been tremendous difficulty for the states to evolve a common architecture for eliminating tariffs. The negotiations are proving difficult in areas that range from intellectual property (where India is reluctant to commit over and above the TRIPS commitments) to e-commerce. All this is because of two major reasons. First, there is mistrust amongst the member states. Second, this mistrust is enhanced due to differential economic size of the member states. At a time when the WTO is sluggish and is struggling to deliver its promises, the RCEP has a prospect to recharge the global trade and act as a 21st-century template of an inclusive group that accommodates a wide diversity of states in terms of economic strength. Broadly, India had two core objections. In general, India has a trade imbalance with China and a trade deficit with all member states. Market access and differential market access: India has a massive trade deficit with China. China is one of the core members of the RCEP. India does not have an FTA with China. So, India feared that the RCEP would give China an access to Indian markets (and an advantage in sectors such as steel, plastics, copper, aluminium, textiles and pharmacy etc.), which will further enhance the trade deficit. So, to mitigate this, India proposed 'differential market access'. Most of the RCEP members have accepted this proposal of India. Since the 2018 Wuhan Summit, China has allowed India to export pharmacy and agrarian commodities to address the trade deficit. Most of the RCEP members want India to lower the custom duties on various products and want India to liberalise its market by allowing a greater market access. India is still reluctant to open up the markets as demanded. This is because India seeks a liberalised access to the services sectors along with free mobility for the workers of India in Australia and Singapore, both of whom are reluctant. Many of the member states have often stated that India is an obstruction to the RCEP. However, such India bashing is wrong because any power will bargain hard to negotiate a deal that maximise its exports if they were to make similar concessions in imports. The conventional logic in any trade deal is that imports are a cost while the exports are a benefit. But in pure economics, the true gains a state will accrue are from imports while exports are the cost to pay for those imports. India has had many concerns with the RCEP. This is why Milton Friedman rightly stated that we can eat imports but we cannot eat exports, as once shipped out, they are not consumable. An analysis of India's negotiating behaviour suggests that our negotiators are concerned that a larger access of China to Indian markets will widen the trade deficit. However, it is important to note that Indian concern here is a good bargaining chip that can be used to seek better access to Chinese markets, but such a chip should not become the guiding behaviour of Indian policy. It is always important for a state to export its products to states that offer a higher price and import from partners that offer products at a lower price. Such a strategy is bound to create an imbalance in bilateral trade. It is this logic India needs to keep in mind while it negotiates the RCEP. The deal will allow multinational enterprises to have large-scale movements in India. The large-scale of labour pool coupled with a huge domestic market would be an inducement for the multinational enterprises to set up production bases in India, thereby giving a flip to the 'Make in India'. It will be beneficial for these multinational enterprises, as through production bases in India, they would get market access to the larger RCEP. Firstly, the free movements of inputs with no tariffs will make the multinational enterprises doubly competitive. Though India has made liberalisation of services and free movement of IT workers a key issue; India needs to remember that its services exports will have a limited market in the RCEP states because of language



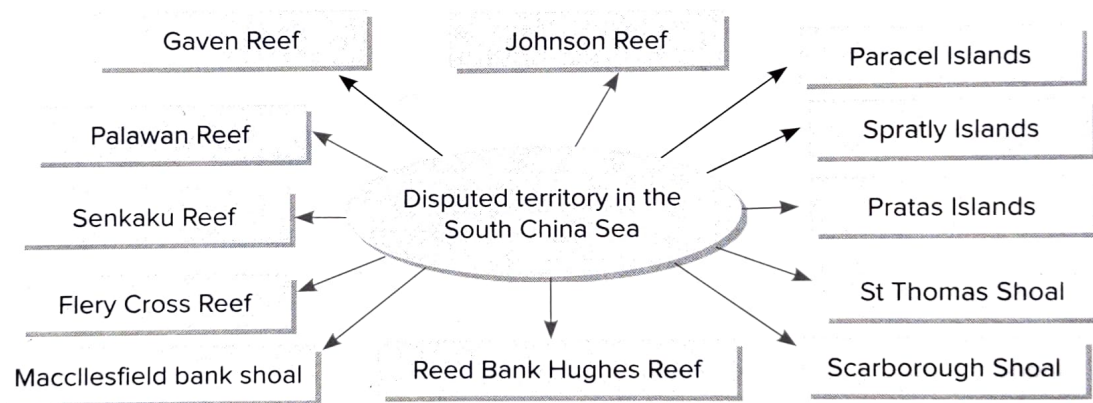
and cultural barriers. These are things that surprisingly a free trade agreement cannot overcome. Secondly, if India makes these two issues as make or break deal issues, it will undermine the larger benefits India stands to accrue from the deal in the manufacturing sector, which anyway has lagged behind in Indian economic development story. India needs to think of itself as a major production base that shall supply the larger products to the vast markets of RCEP states.

### Reasons why India pulled out of RCEP

- Inadequate protection against the surges in imports and a fear that China might flood Indian markets.
- India wanted an auto-trigger mechanism that would enable India to raise tariffs on products in case imports crossed a certain threshold, but the demand was rejected.
- India was unable to seek credible assurance over use of non-tariff barriers by states as such barriers prevent the growth of Indian exports.
- Rules of origin in trade mean criteria used to determine the national source of a product. India wanted certain measures to check possible circumvention as certain countries try to route products from states where India would maintain higher tariffs.
- India also could not get a favourable base year that would be used to reduce tariffs on products that would be traded as a part of the deal.

### THE SOUTH CHINA SEA DISPUTE AND INDIA'S STAND ON THE ISSUE

In 1949, when the People's Republic of China was born, they began to issue passports to their citizens. In these passports, China on the background showed a map. In this map, China showed the Mainland China and some islands in the South China Sea (SCS).



These islands belonged to other countries such as Brunei, Vietnam, Philippines etc. The citizens of China used their passports to travel to these states. In 1970s, these states began to observe the cartographic aggression of China in the maps. They showed the islands belonging to others as a part of China by drawing a hypothetical U-shaped line around the islands. The U-shaped line, a hypothetical dotted line, was found to be a 9-dash line by the South East Asians. They took up the matter with China and sought explanation as why did China try to claim the islands that belong to them as a part of its own territory? China did not issue any clarification and this upset the South East Asian states. In 1982, as the time progressed, UNCLOS (UN Convention on Law of International Seas) was born. When India became independent, it extended sovereign rights over the continental shelf without mentioning the depth or distance of the territories. Gradually by 1956, it claimed a 'fisheries zone' up to 100 miles away of territorial waters. At the international level, the US and the USSR were negotiating the width of territorial waters but were not able to reach consensus. In 1958, the first UNCLOS meeting adopted a codified law known as the Geneva Convention, which accepted freedom of navigation of the seas and sovereignty of a state in territorial sea. It worked to adopt immigration rights for contiguous zones but the first UNCLOS



could not evolve consensus on the issues regarding the width of territorial waters and economic fisheries zones. In 1960, the second meet of UNCLOS was held, in which there evolved the idea of having territorial waters up to six miles. It was also proposed that an additional six miles beyond territorial waters be considered as economic fisheries zone, but a two-thirds majority could not emerge and eventually this idea failed once again. In the first UNCLOS meeting, India proposed that any warship should get authorisation from the state. There was no consensus on this issue in the UNCLOS meeting and the proposal, therefore, could not be added. Consequently, India refused to ratify the Geneva Convention, which emerged after the first UNCLOS meet. In 1967, as Pakistan extended its territorial waters from 3 to 12 nautical miles (NM), India also did the same on 12th September 1967. During the 1960s, as the technologies progressed, nations began to use modern technology to explore oil and gas in the seabed. This advancement in seabed technology led the countries to take steps to safeguard their interests. Some advanced nations deployed submissions with ballistic missiles. This compelled the UN to find a solution. In 1968, the General Assembly established a Seabed Commission of 42 UN members to discuss how nations can peacefully use the seabed. In 1970, a Declaration of Principles was accepted whereby the areas of seabed and resources in the seabed were to be considered the common heritage of humanity and the seabed and resources were declared to be subject to a global regime through a treaty. This was the time when the Indian government had authorised the mining of polymetallic modules from the seabed and had also discovered oil and gas in Bombay and Andaman Islands. On 25th August 1976, India passed the Maritime Zones Act. The act stated that up to 12 NM would be territorial waters, 24 NM would be contiguous zone and up to 200 NM would be EEZ and to enforce its compliance, the government established coast guard as an armed force of the Union of India in 1978. The Indian coast guard was to enforce the act and assist the fishermen in distress, in addition to providing back up to customs in anti-smuggling activities and prevention of marine pollution. In 1973, at the global level, began the third meeting of UNCLOS or UNCLOS-3. India participated in UNCLOS-3 and proposed 'Freedom of Navigation' and free mobility of naval ships. It also advocated the idea that Andaman and Nicobar Islands be declared as archipelago islets. India further advocated division of waters as per its own maritime zone act. India was included as a pioneer investor for seabed mining. Most of what India advocated was agreed in the UNCLOS-3 declarations. But there was an opposition to the idea of notifications being needed by foreign warships in the territorial waters of a foreign state. Moreover, Andaman was not accorded the status of an archipelago as UNCLOS-3 granted the status only to those islets that had a distinct political entity. This was done to ensure that off-lying islets are not used by states to restrict freedom of navigation. The UNCLOS-3 also held that 500 metres around any artificial island should be a safety zone. India's proposal for a bigger buffer area was not accepted. India has, since then, peacefully concluded agreements with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and Maldives and Indonesia over a period of time. The UNCLOS-3, after negotiating for nine years, adopted the draft of UNCLOS in 1982. It adopted five zones, as given in the table below:

S. No	Zones	Area	Rights	Indian Agencies
1.	Internal waters	Within	Full sovereignty	Law and order agencies
2.	Territorial waters	0 to 12 NM	Full sovereignty	Marine police and coast guard
3.	Contiguous zone	12–24 NM	Full sovereignty	Coast guard, customs and CISF-Marines
4.	Exclusive economic zone	24–200 NM	Mining, fishing and oil exploration only	Indian navy
5.	High seas	200 NM and above	Open zone	No domestic agency

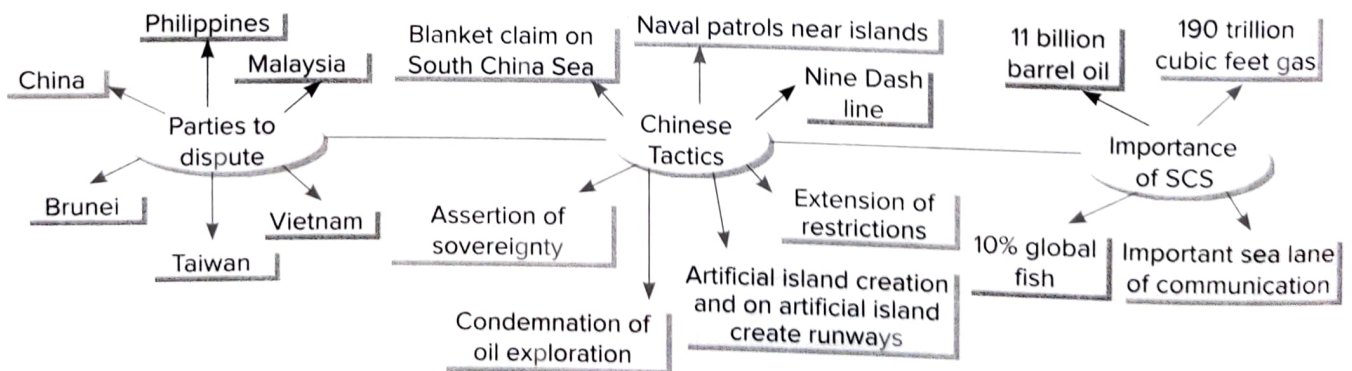
UNCLOS said that a country in its territorial waters and contiguous zone can create artificial islands but cannot extend its zones further from the islands because the zones remain as they were measured in 1982. It said that there is a possibility of two nations and their zones overlap. The overlap will occur when a country can draw a 200 NM EEZ in any direction from its coast. When it draws that 200 NM line, such a line, which can be in any direction, can overlap with another maritime neighbour. In such a scenario, the two nations have to bilaterally identify a Common Zone of Activity (CZA). The CZA will enable both maritime neighbours whose zones are overlapping to identify where to do fishing, explore oil and minerals. If two states are unable to bilaterally demarcate the CZA, the aggrieved party can approach the Permanent Court of Arbitration—PCA (established in 1899 by the Hague Convention; it is a permanent international bureaucracy to



### From 11-dash line to 9-dash line

In 1947, when China took control of some islets in the South China Sea occupied by Japan, they created a map with 11-dash line to show them as a part of China. In 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) established presence there and the KMT regime fled to Taiwan. Since then the PRC became the legal legitimate representative of China and decided to control the entire maritime claims of the region. As the Republic of China government fled to Taiwan, the PRC government allowed the North Vietnam regime to establish a radar station and a transit point for goods in the South China Sea. This was done on the basis of spirit of comradeship and brotherhood with the communist North Vietnamese regime. In 1957, China ceded Bailongwei island to Hanoi. Thus, the two dashes were removed by China to bypass the Gulf of Tonkin as a gesture to North Vietnam.

arbitrate disputes brought to them by the states. The PCA is not a court and is in no way related to the International Court of Justice, ICJ, which is a court of the UN). China not only created an arbitrary 9-dash line but also began to create artificial islands and began to extend their zones further (prohibited by UNCLOS). Thus, keeping in mind the strategic significance of the South China Sea, India firstly feels that the fact distortion strategy of China is similar to the fact distortion strategy it has adopted in Himalayas where it sends army officials disguised as grazers, villagers and road engineers. In the South China Sea, China has been sending coast guard personal, fishermen and militias to make historic claims in the region. As the Cold War ended, there was a sense that the US would withdraw from the South East and the East Asia as its strategic goals to contain the Soviets had ended. As the debate on a power vacuum left by the US was raging, China became possible filler. In 1995, the Chinese had built upon an artificial island on Mischief Reef in Spratly, located very close to the Philippines. As Taiwan was gearing up for its first presidential election, during a military exercise by China in 1996 in the Taiwan Straits, it launched a few missiles. This incident brought the US back into the picture as it sent a US carrier force into Taiwan Strait to signal China that it would not tolerate any interference or restriction on its maritime activity in the SCS. In 1992, at a meeting of Foreign Ministers of ASEAN, all nations had agreed upon a joint declaration on SCS with a commonly agreed principle of not using any violence in the dispute settlement. As ASEAN expanded at the end of the Cold War, it brought Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Brunei within its fold. The 10-member ASEAN block had nations that had claims on territories in the SCS. In the first decade since the end of the Cold War, China, however, insisted that it would resolve all disputes in SCS bilaterally with the states. In 1999, ASEAN adopted a Draft Code of Conduct putting an end to more occupation of reefs in the SCS. China again proposed that joint cooperation be the core value in dispute settlement. In 2002, the Draft Code of Conduct was finally adopted as a Declaration of Conduct of Parties as conflicts had flared up repeatedly due to China's assertiveness and territorial claims in the SCS due to the presence of oil and gas region. In the recent past, we have witnessed China asserting itself over the "nine-dash line" to virtually claim the entire South China Sea. Countries in the region and the US have blamed China for aggressively militarising the SCS. China has been resorting to a passive-aggressive strategy to state claims.



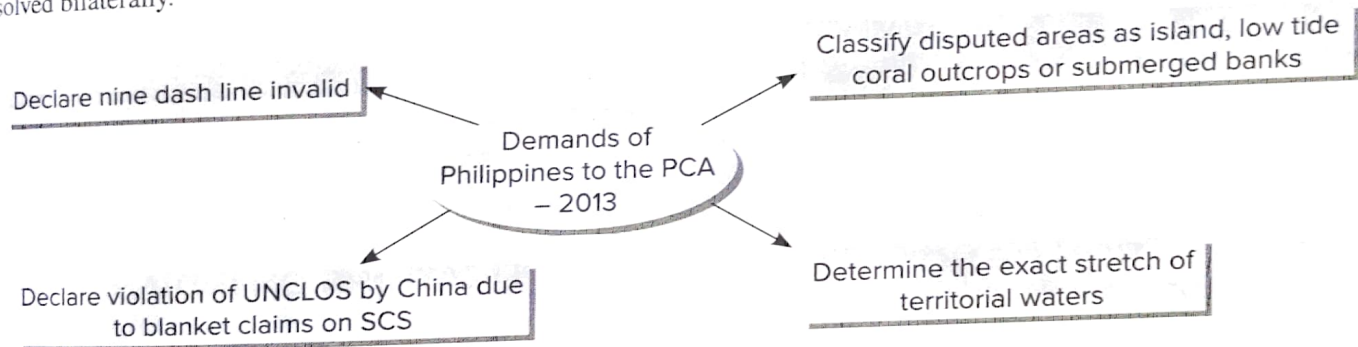
In fact, in September 2015, Rear Admiral Yuan Yubai of the Chinese Navy stated that the South China Sea also belongs to China as the name itself has 'China' embedded in it. China has made a shift from its earlier strategy of invasions to creation of new facts by confounding, bullying and bribing its adversaries. In 2010, China said that Tibet, Xinjiang province and



South China Sea are part of 'Core National Interests' of China. China has clarified that Core National Interest signifies that the issue will be significant enough for China to go to war. Despite the fact that China, in 2002, in the 8th ASEAN Summit, agreed upon a Declaration of Conduct to solve issues in South China Sea peacefully with no use of force, its strategy to distort facts continues. Since 2010, China has been converting uninhabited islets into artificial islets to bring it under UNCLOS (examples would include Haven Reef, Johnson South Reef and Fiery Cross Reef). China has been changing the size and structure of the reefs by modifying their physical land features. It has also established airstrips on Parcel and Spratly. In 2012, China snatched away Scarborough Shoal. In 2019, it used swarming tactics with fishing boats in the Thitu Islands against Philippines. The scramble of SCS by China is for

- Fishing rights
- Natural resources
- Domination of trade route
- Energy and oil

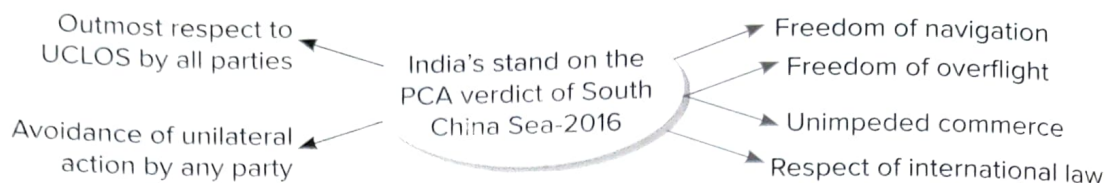
After years of undertaking futile negotiations at a bilateral level with China, the Philippines, decided to take the issue to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in January 2013. China opposed it, advocating that the issue needs to be resolved bilaterally.



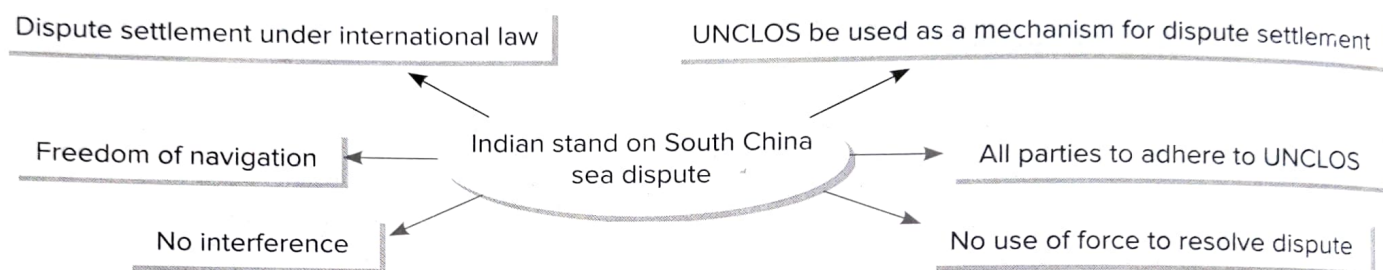
The reason for the Philippines suddenly dragging China to the PCA was that China had escalated the tension by taking control of the disputed Scarborough Shoal in 2012. Tensions further got aggravated in 2012 when Chinese vessels began to poach marine species at Scarborough Shoal and Chinese surveillance strips prevented the authorities of Philippines to apprehend them. In July 2016, after three years of intense deliberations on the SCS, the tribunal came out with a 501-page award in favour of Philippines.



However, China has refused to follow the verdict of the PCA. Considering the fact that PCA lacks an enforcement mechanism, nothing on the ground is likely to change, though the verdict is a morale booster for Philippines. The award is, however, likely to heavily affect diplomatic and economic ties between China and Philippines.



India is not a party to the dispute in the South China Sea. However, as it explore soil jointly with Vietnam and also uses the sea-lanes of communication for commerce, in the recent times, it has evolved a stand based on the points above. India's Act East Policy has made India more sensitive to the concerns of its ASEAN friends. India's stand to endorse Freedom of Navigation in South China Sea is a prerequisite for India to meet its rising military ambitions. India has also conveyed to China that if non-proliferation rules cannot be bent for India (for instance, in case of India's membership to NSG) then UNCLOS cannot be bent for China.



## NUCLEARISATION OF NORTH KOREA AND IMPLICATIONS ON INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

The Biden Administration has inherited a specific problem of a nuclear North Korean (which has capacity to make 10 bombs due to possession of 50 kg plutonium). The US has demanded a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of North Korea. It adopted deft diplomacy to tackle it as visible in the first ever rapprochement between North Korea and the US, first in Singapore in 2018 and then at the Hanoi Summit in 2019. The antecedents of this denuclearisation deal have several historic dynamics attached to them: Firstly, the US decided to relegate the core tenet of the American policy of denuclearisation of North Korea based on Libyan model. Tracing the history of this model, back in 2004, Col. Qaddafi, the then leader of Libya had relinquished the nuclear weapons in return for economic integration with economies of the West only to be toppled down and killed in the wave of Arab Spring that began in 2011. This American relegation of the Libyan model, as seen in Singapore Summit, was primarily due to the fact that Pyongyang had issued threats that it will not negotiate unless there is a guarantee that Americans will not resort to the Libyan model. The Americans have sought total disarmament and have devised a policy to exert 'maximum pressure' on North Korea. However, in the Hanoi Summit in 2019, the Americans had explicitly acknowledged that total disarmament would not be possible unless there were many rounds of negotiations. Secondly, and most importantly, at the Hanoi Summit, the Americans had adopted a new approach where they decided to not put new sanctions on North Korea, while retaining the existing sanctions, and thereby promising to not cripple North Korea further. This, according to the Americans, would give window to North Korea to negotiate while maintaining deterrence. In return, Pyongyang would cease nuclear and missile tests. The Chinese and Russians favoured this idea too. The sticky issues however remained, as North Korea had insisted that the only possibility for it to undertake complete denuclearisation would occur when the US would withdraw nuclear capable forces and armament from the region including an additional security guarantee to the North Koreans by America. So far, the United States has refrained from any discussions on these pertinent concerns. As the Libyan model is not to be used by the Americans anymore, North Korea has insisted on the South African model. In the South African model, South Africa dismantled their six nuclear weapons and also destroyed all documents related to nuclear weapons. But South Africa still maintained weapons grade enriched uranium and then allowed the inspections from the international community. Today, as North Korea has refused to allow international inspections, probably they too insist on the South African model as they want denuclearisation but



without monitoring by international agencies. This will enable North Korea to keep covert sub-regional capabilities. If the South African model is applied by the US in North Korea, North Korea will give up long-range capabilities but may still be allowed to possess atomic assets, thereby giving North Korea the potential to become the new Pakistan on the global nuclear map. Unlike Pakistan that could have established nuclear weapons after India vivisected East Pakistan in 1971, as a tool to conduct a low-intensity military conflict against India in Afghanistan and Kashmir, for North Korea, the nuclear weapon is a harbinger of peace, which is the greatest distinction between these two scenarios of nuclear-war possessing nations. The debate of the Korean crisis offers an important lesson to Pakistan—that nuclear weapons are not the end in them and can always be traded for greater causes such as peace with adversaries and economic benefits. India has asserted that the nuclearisation of North Korea is a threat to the sovereignty and security of India. India continues to press on the need for an in-depth investigation by the international community on how North Korea could acquire nuclear weapons in the first place (India suspects this was through covert support of China and Pakistan). Any attempts towards denuclearisation of North Korea will help India in two ways. Firstly, it will end the unholy nexus between Pakistan and North Korea, thereby bringing more strategic stability in the region. Secondly, it will allow New Delhi a window to boost trade and commercial ties with North Korea. There is one lesson for India from the Korean crisis, that is, there is always room for creative diplomacy for the strong will states (should be read in reference to Pakistan).



# 4

## CHAPTER

# The Era of Minilateralism: The QUAD, Indo-Pacific, AUKUS and Indian Diplomacy

### THE RISE OF MINILATERALISM IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

#### What Exactly does Minilateral Stand for?

While there is no scholarly consensus on how to define a minilateral, the experience in Indo-Pacific suggests that minilaterals is a group that consists of three to nine nations that come together exclusively to concretise a flexible and functional policy objective. They follow the critical mass approach, which implies that they only comprise nations that are relevant to addressing the issue in question that defines the creation of the platform. Some of the examples include the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue of Japan, Australia and the US created in 2002, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) of Australia, the US, India and Japan created in 2007 and Malacca Strait Sea Patrol group created in 2004 between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. The Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) established in 2015 between China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam also are a part of the same.

In the preceding chapters, we have understood that the regional security architecture in Indo-Pacific during the Cold War was dominated by two primary axes of security cooperation and they were bilateralism (where the US and the Soviet Union had bilateral ties with nation states of the region) and multilateralism (which was dominated by ASEAN architecture since 1967). At the bilateral levels, the focus of the US was to forge a network of alliances with Australia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Philippines and this was called during the Cold War as the San Francisco System. Through these alliances, the US was able to establish its complete presence in the Indo-Pacific. Initially, as analysed previously, the attempts to forge multilateral cooperation were relatively difficult because the member states in the Indo-Pacific had a lot of mistrust with each other. However, with the creation of ASEAN in 1967 and later the East Asian Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum, the things began to change. Since the beginning of 2000s, the region had started to witness a new more of regional cooperation and the Indo-Pacific was seeing rise of minilateral platforms that were specifically designed to achieve security objectives. The rise of LMC and revival of the QUAD in 2017 were a testimony of how minilaterals were making a re-entry in Indo-Pacific in the era of Sino-US rivalry. The issue to understand here is that the rise of minilaterals in Indo-Pacific is primarily driven by two factors. The first is due to rising doubts of sustainability of the US leadership and alliances of the Cold War to solve regional issues. The second is the failure of existing bilateral (alliances) and multilateral (ASEAN) to address the growing regional security concerns. In this context, the rising regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific under the minilaterals is driven by an urge to establish a new 'coalition of the willing'. Today, the region of Indo-Pacific is witnessing a new and a strange phenomenon of ASEAN-centric multilateralism, minilateral-multilateralism and bilateralism nexus-based diplomacy.

### CONCEPTUALISING MINILATERALISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

If we have to define what a minilateral is, we must first understand what multilateralism is and how is minilateralism different. Firstly, the concept of minilateralism draws from the literature of multilateralism only and both involve cooperation involving indeterminate number of parties. Thus, speaking purely in the numerical sense, the minilateralism is a subset of multilateralism. What differentiates minilateralism from multilateralism are two factors and they include the numerical strength and the qualitative dimension of



engagement. In contrast to a multilateral group, numerically speaking, the minilateral will involve a smaller group of participants. While there may be no consensus on a 'magic number' to define a minilateral, but based upon the issues such as climate change, nuclear proliferation, protection of sea lanes of communication etc.; the magic number for effective action can be up to twenty. In the context of Indo-Pacific, the numbers involved in minilaterals are even smaller. The second dimension is the qualitative dimension and that means that in a minilateral, there is more focus on functional exclusivity than a multilateral. Generally speaking, a multilateral works on indivisibility and generalised organising principles which require a broad and an inclusive approach. This makes consensus making on a multilateral platform relatively difficult. This is where a minilateral differs. Here, the conceptualisation involves an acknowledgement of discriminatory nature of power, which means that there is an acceptance that only a few nations have the potential to resolve a particular issue. In contrast to multilateralism, there is more realistic assessment of driving action for solving problems with select handful players. In this sense, there is a general perception that because minilaterals promote power asymmetries, thus they are undemocratic and exclusionary. The primary reaction of China to the QUAD is principally driven by this rationale. The Chinese believe that QUAD is an Asian NATO and divides the Asia-Pacific (the Chinese refuse to use Indo-Pacific because they call it an American conception) into hostile armed blocs. Practically speaking, the minilaterals in this sense can either maintain the regional balance of power or end up fuelling security dilemmas in the region. The third distinguishing feature of a minilateral from a multilateral is that it is more nimble and targeted in its approach because the governance is more informal and focused on functional objectives that are clearly articulated. The multilaterals have a more delayed decision making and sometimes interests of the states are generally not served. Thereby, a minilateral that way offers states a sense of an additional middle-ground for their security interests which are not fully served at the bilateral and multilateral levels. As the commitment to multilateralism declines, the minilaterals today buttress the global multilaterals by supplementing their existing inadequacies. The creation of Malacca Strait Sea Patrols, Sulu Sea Trilateral Patrols and Our Eyes Initiative (intelligence sharing initiative of Southeast Asian states) are concrete operationalisations of minilaterals under the multilateral ASEAN. Functionally, the nature of minilaterals suggests that these arrangements are flexible enough that they form and disband without any institutional legacy. This is a classic feature which distinguishes minilaterals from multilaterals where the focus is on rules and long-term reciprocity. While such a tactic appears good for driving a collective action but the lack of institutional legacy also means that the sustainability of the minilateral is pretty much contingent upon interests of parties that are participating. For instance, the QUAD was initially formed in 2007 but then faded into obscurity when Shinzo Abe, the Japanese Prime Minister had resigned and Kevin Rudd, the Australian Prime Minister to withdrew because it was not interested in provoking the Chinese. Its revival in 2017 was a testimony to the assertion made in the previous statement. Having understood the conceptual underpinnings, we can now proceed to analyse the minilateralism in practice in Indo-Pacific in more detail.

## SHIFTING CENTRE OF GRAVITY FROM ASIA-PACIFIC TO INDO-PACIFIC

Since the end of World War II, the East was always called the Asia-Pacific. This was also because the countries in the region were underdeveloped, yet to come out colonial hangover and struggling to stand up economically. This period also coincided with the period of the Cold War where the Atlantic occupied prominence in global trade and resurgence of West. Since 1980s, the centre of gravity seemed to shift eastwards. With rise of China, the end of the Cold War, rise of the post-Cold War, globalisation and economic dynamism reflected by the Southeast and East Asians, the power centres of the East began to become prominent and Atlantic power centres witnessed stagnation. Taking a positive cue of the changed geo-economic and geo-political realities, the Japanese and Indians began to champion the idea of Indo-Pacific. With increased interactions, shared strategic concerns and rising economic interdependencies between Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean, the Indo-Pacific concept started gaining strategic currency. The re-scaling of Asian region indicated a fundamental shift in core drivers of regionalism. Various factors today drive the shift towards Indo-Pacific and they include emergence of economically significant Japan and India, rising an economically powerful China, Sino-US rivalry because of Chinese attempts to displace the US as a global power, rising maritime assertiveness of China in South China Sea and increased threats of piracy, terrorism and natural disasters to the most important sea lane of communication that carries the bulk of global oil shipments and cargo. India has openly embraced the concept of Indo-Pacific because it accords India, a self-consciously rising power, the status of a regional power, which it was not offered under the Asia-Pacific framework. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue as a new regional minilateral must be seen in this perspective. But before we analyse the QUAD, it is important to place the origin of QUAD as a minilateral in a proper setting.



## INDIA'S SIX-LAYERED POLICY AND SEVEN PILLARS FOR INDO-PACIFIC

For India, Indo-Pacific is part where it is adopting an interlocked six-layer strategy. These six layers are based on India's own ability and its global aspirations. They include

1. Mutual prosperity-centric development of blue economy and a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)
2. Enhancing the capabilities at the naval level and seeking interoperability at naval and defence level
3. Linking connectivity and infrastructure
4. Seeking presence in informal groupings that range from dimensions like security (QUAD) to humanitarian assistance
5. Leveraging the centrality of ASEAN through Act East Policy
6. Building up cultural and religious relations through faith diplomacy

India has focused on six pillars of Indo-Pacific. They include

1. Maritime domain awareness
2. Marine environment
3. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
4. Sustainable use of maritime resources
5. Science and technology
6. Capacity building

## MINILATERALISM OF QUAD IN INDO-PACIFIC: LEGACY, VIABILITY AND DEFICIENCIES OF NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

The region of Indo-Pacific in recent times has been witnessing a host of security challenges. At one place, the region is witnessing nuclearisation by North Korea and on the other side, there is an attempt of China to display assertiveness in the South China Sea. The Chinese are also locked in contestation of maritime waters of Vietnam and claiming islands of Japan, the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. The sea lanes of communication are constantly under a threat and there are dangers to the maritime commerce at a time when the world is recouping from the ills of pandemic and disrupted supply chains. In this backdrop, while the nations in the Indo-Pacific have always seen the US as a reliable security provider, but with diminishing interest of the US to provide reliable security, its domestic 'America First' thinking, its reluctance to cooperate with nations during the pandemic, its inability in rebuilding disrupted supply chains of Indo-Pacific have compelled the nation states to seek refuge in concretising new minilaterals for ensuring their own security. The history of minilaterals, as examined in the previous sections, clearly prove that they have been often successful in climate change, arms control, institution building, trade and nuclear non-proliferation but the venturing of minilaterals in the arena of security in Indo-Pacific is a new phenomenon. Throughout the history that has unfolded after the World War II, it has been seen that the US has adopted a different policy for security in Europe and Asia. In Europe, the US has provided security to all states under the umbrella of NATO and in Asia, the US has tried to provide security through bilateral alliance agreements with Australia, Japan, Philippines and South Korea. The US has explained this divergent approaches to security by stating that the entire theatre of Europe was witnessing a common threat of Soviet Union and the ground realities in Asia are different because here, no single entity has ever posed a threat which is commonly faced by all. This is why the US asserts that the region of Indo-Pacific requires a country by country approach. However, this rationale of the US does explain the regional security concerns in the Cold War period. Since the end of the Cold War, there has been an aggressive attempt of China to grow its economy. As Chinese have grown economically powerful and have integrated their economy with the economies of the Southeast and the East Asian states; Chinese have started to use their economic power to become militarily strong. They have started using military tactics to stake claims over islands and blanket claims over oceanic waters in South China Sea. Similarly, North Korea today is propped up by the Chinese as a laboratory of power assertion. The Chinese have been secretly funding the North Korean nuclearisation because North Korea will then keep regional powers such as Japan, Australia, Thailand and South Korea bogged down in Indo-Pacific while allowing the Chinese the space to assert global power. In 1999, as a response to North Korean nuclearisation issue, the US, Japan and South Korea came together



to form Trilateral Cooperation and Oversight Group (TCOG). The TCOG was an inter-alliance approach of powers in Indo-Pacific to have a coordinated response to a new regional security challenge. However, the TCOG failed to establish any credible response because the Americans wanted to use the TCOG to bring about a regime change in North Korea, on lines with their policies in Iraq and Libya, and this is what precisely concerned the South Koreans and the Japanese because they felt that any such power vacuum brought in by the Americans through a deliberate and forcible regime change in North Korea would only end up opening more space for the intervention of China and make South Korea and Japan more vulnerable to Chinese adventurism. In 2001, the US tried to then create the Trilateral Security Dialogue (TSD) as a mechanism to solve North Korea issue and now brought the Japanese, Australians and Americans on one platform. The TSD was envisaged as a complementary instrument to the TCOG in driving a collective minilateral policy response to North Korea. The TSD became a confused grouping because the Australians insisted that Chinese also be brought in to play a constructive role in the management of the regional security threat posed by North Korea. Since 2001, the subsequent meetings of the TSD have only displayed an urge to manage a host of threats that range from traditional to non-traditional security and the minilateral again lost its purpose. In this backdrop, the third minilateral grouping that unfolded in the region of Indo-Pacific in 2007–8 was the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD or QSD) with Australia, the US, India and Japan. A revised edition of the QSD was launched in 2017, with democracy as a common binding factor reasserted. Since 2017, all the four partners of the QSD have outlined their own conceptual underpinnings of the QSD. For the US, the QSD is clearly a new minilateral that will be used to contain the rise of an aggressive China. This thought, though shared by Japan and Australia, but is articulated differently. For Japan, the QSD is an attempt to seek American assurance in protection of its islands under dispute with China while for Australia, it is an attempt to rebalance power equations and re-assert its own role in Indo-Pacific. India has clearly articulated that it does not see QSD directed against any country (especially China here) but is focused on ensuring freedom of navigation and a free and open Indo-Pacific. India is not keen to see beyond Indian Ocean today. It is certainly concerned about the muscular policy of Beijing in South China Sea but is reluctant to expend resources under the QSD for a coordinated response to security challenges. India has time and again clarified that its conception of Indo-Pacific is not a club limited to a few members and India asserts that it sees the Indo-Pacific as an open, free and inclusive space which is driven by the ASEAN centrality to seek a common, rules-based order for regional states. At one place, the Indian establishment is part of American-led QSD which is aimed at containing China outside ASEAN mechanisms and here is India which has been asserting that QSD is neither anti-China nor outside ASEAN centrality. The deliberate reason for India to assert the centrality of ASEAN here is because India's Act East Policy looks at engagement with ASEAN and EAS as the fulcrum of its eastward thinking and not an outright embrace under the orbital policy architecture spearheaded by the US. In this sense, India has a 'non-bloc' vision of regional security in the new conception of Indo-Pacific. In this context, one thing is very clear that the new minilaterals in the region of Indo-Pacific are yet to articulate coherent responses to regional security. The QSD members do not have any procedural roadmap and a consensus on operational preferences. There is not a single national interest that is shared by the four participants of QSD, thereby making the grouping less significant operationally and more prominent for mere optics. The players that are kept outside of these new minilaterals such as QSD have tried to develop a disdain and have continued to use existing ASEAN mechanisms and champion 'ASEAN way' and ASEAN centrality in resolving regional concerns. This confusion over the minilaterals in the Indo-Pacific has allowed the Chinese to continue to be assertive and mould state behaviours as per their interests.

## PHILOSOPHY OF QUAD AS MAKE CHINA RESPONSIBLE FRAMEWORK

In the years ahead, the QUAD will become a high strategic grouping. It will not just be stuck with existing four members but include other like-minded players that range from South Korea to Singapore etc. The QUAD will ensure the delivery of public goods through open, secured and uncontested sea lanes of communication and create passages for free movement of people, energy supplies and trade. The QUAD in future will replace the Pax Americana that for long had been writing security in different regions of the world. The second thing QUAD will ensure is that it will open up spaces for infrastructure creation in realm of Indo-Pacific through big investments that till now were only dependent upon China. In this sense, QUAD will not just bring finances for physical infrastructure but technology instruments that have never been shared by the Global North with Global South. More importantly, the QUAD will ensure that we do not create a "No China" world because the entire world wants China and has benefitted from its low-cost manufacturing skill. But the QUAD will ensure



that China is kept honest in its economic and political engagements when all players engaging with China collectively put up a combined front. In this sense, the QUAD must be seen as a “Make China Responsible” framework designed to keep Chinese honest and a responsible actor in the global economic system. The pandemic has created a situation where Captain America is missing in action and an irresponsible new power with no regard for democratic opinions of others is put in charge. Seen through this lense, the QUAD is a coalition emerging under the American patronage, of middle powers which is not a luxury or choice in international relations but an existential reason to invest into.

## THE LANCANG–MEKONG COOPERATION AND COMPETITIVE DIPLOMACY

In this backdrop, the Chinese attempts to conceptualise the Lancang–Mekong Cooperation (LMC) is interesting. The LMC was launched in 2015 between China and its neighbouring region and had a focus on political-security issues, economic affairs, social affairs, people-to-people ties and sustainable development. The LMC in the recent times is a new attempt of the Chinese to strengthen their presence and influence in the Mekong region. The deliberate attempt of the Chinese to mention sustainable development in LMC is to display a new template of hydro-diplomacy. Today, the Chinese are an upstream state in case of Mekong river and the LMC offers the Chinese an opportunity to improve living conditions of people in the downstream region. There is a growing perception in the ASEAN states that China wants to project LMC as a new version of ‘Asian Security and Development’ architecture, akin to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) of Central Asia. The ASEAN members argue that while the Indo-Pacific is gradually witnessing the rise of new minilaterals, these groupings must not compete with ASEAN but compliment ASEAN. This is where India is able to score brownie points by asserting that its vision of Indo-Pacific and QSD both put ASEAN at the centre of fulcrum but the Chinese through their LMC appear to go on a divergent path. This way the Indo-Pacific seems to witness a host of competitive and cooperative minilateral architectures.

## THE AUKUS ALLIANCE, POTENTIALITIES ON ECLIPSING QUAD, THE RELEVANCE OF NPT AND INDIA ON AUKUS

In September 2021, the US, Australia and United Kingdom outlined a new historic security pact called the AUKUS, taking initial letters of the participating states. This announcement came after the US withdrew from Afghanistan the same year. The attempt of the US to share sensitive technologies and nuclear technologies came as a big relief to American friends and allies in the region who were awry to see a declining power of the US in Asia. The US through AUKUS has sent a clear and strong signal to the regional friends and allies that the new centre of gravity for the US is Indo-Pacific and this region will now be a theatre of new strategic contestations and the US is willing to play a crucial role. Under the alliance, the US and the UK are going to share sensitive nuclear technologies with Canberra and enable the Australians to develop eight nuclear-powered submarines. It is important to note that since 1957, the US, New Zealand and Australia had partnered under the ANZUS alliance. This made the Australians a part of the larger American security umbrella during the Cold War. However, since the Chinese transitioned to an open economy since 1978, there has been a concerted attempt by China to seek deep economic relations with resource-rich Australia. The relationship between Australia and China economically deepened after the end of the Cold War to this extent that almost every Australian Prime Minister since the end of the Cold War was fluent in mandarin language. The deepening of economic relations of Australia and China on one hand and strategic relations of the US and Australia on the other hand was always a bottleneck in Australian identity. The Australians were witnessing a dilemma on announcing whether they are with the US or with China. They could neither leave China as Chinese sustained Australian economic growth and they could not leave the American embrace as America was a part of rebuilding of Australia in the post-World War twice. In this backdrop, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about the clarity in Australian identity. The Australians insisted that China must allow a thorough investigation by WHO on origins of COVID-19 that had killed millions of people globally. The reluctance of China to allow open investigations soured the relations between Australia and China and the Americans took advantage of this sourness to bring back the Australians into the American fold once again. By offering support of sharing of sensitive nuclear technologies to aid the development of nuclear-powered submarines, Australia will be economically able to balance off the support it was contingent upon from China. However, just because the submarines are nuclear-powered does not mean that they are going to have nuclear warheads. The technology is sensitive because not every country in the world possess the technology to power submarines



by nuclear grade fuels. The move of AUKUS is also seen by the US to counter China in Indo-Pacific. Under the NPT, the Australians are prohibited to manufacture nuclear warheads. However, the NPT has a shortcoming as it exempts the naval reactors. The US has used double standards here and has not allowed India to access this technology by stating that it is a classified technology. However, the message to India is very clear. The Americans will help India with most advanced and sensitive technologies only if India shuns strategic autonomy and embraces the American alliance system and helps the US counter China in Indo-Pacific, which at the moments is certainly not a priority for India. The Chinese have blunted the AUKUS by discounting it and have mocked at the Americans for sharing obsolete cold war technologies of 1970s with its allies. It has used the occasion to humiliate the Australians by pushing a message amongst the Indo-Pacific region that on embracing America, the member states will only get old American junk technologies. However, the Chinese have also cautioned that the AUKUS will revive a new cold war in the region and stated that this new zero sum game mentality will only create narrow geopolitical spaces in Indo-Pacific that would hinder the growth prospects of Indo-Pacific. The responses from India are quite different. India is of the belief that AUKUS will now keep the Australians, Americans and British busy in building yet another minilateral nuclear architecture. This will allow India the space in Indo-Pacific to up the game of development diplomacy by focusing on vaccine diplomacy, infrastructure building, technology and supply chains. India is however not happy in the way the Americans have displayed negativity in rejecting France as an important player. This negation of France in AUKUS and American preoccupation with British as the only reliable ally after BREXIT has confirmed to many that America does not consider other European states as valuable allies. While France is certainly angry, it provides India and France an opportunity to conceptualise their own developmental blueprint in Indo-Pacific. India is no doubt happy to see that Australia, which is a traditional friend and a close partner of India in QSD, is getting nuclear-powered submarines. India is worried that the Eastern Indian Ocean will not only get crowded with submarines that would erode India's influence and authority over the Indian Ocean but it would also compel China to resort to more adventurism in Eastern Indian Ocean. While China will be away from the Indian waters and deploy submarines and warships in Eastern Indian Ocean, but the presence of these warships in littorals of Indian Ocean will put pressure on Indian naval assets. The other game of AUKUS is of technology supremacy. By integrating the defence industrial supply chains, the Australians, the US and British will now be able to beat China in the race for high-tech supremacy. The QSD and AUKUS members are likely to expand cooperation in quantum technology, artificial intelligence and this will shift the power balance in Indo-Pacific. In this sense, India sees the AUKUS as a pact that will bolster the QSD to search for open-minded and creative solutions for upcoming regional security challenges. India however feels that QSD till now was a non-military and non-security minilateral that was struggling to outline an identity of its own. The coming of AUKUS has taken away the aura of QSD and India feels that the sheen of QSD will be lost. But QSD is not a military alliance and a minilateral of like-minded states to cooperate on regional challenges and uphold international rules and values that will strengthen peace, stability and security of Indo-Pacific.

## TRADE INTEGRATION, SECURITY RIVALRIES AND DILEMMA DIPLOMACY

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a growing economic integration of states in Indo-Pacific. This integration, it must be clarified is driven more by trade and investments and less by movement of people. The core drivers of this trade integration include rise of China as manufacturing power, regional trade mechanisms such as ASEAN and the recently concluded Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The intra-Asian trade integration in the Indo-Pacific has a serious geopolitical significance because the important driver is the rise of China and in this backdrop, the US will find it difficult to isolate China. The Americans cannot afford to use the same strategies of the Cold War because in the Cold War, they were able to contain Soviet as they never created economic interdependences. This is what makes the rise of China different as a strategic and economic challenge for the Americans to tackle. The strategic dilemmas are compounded in Indo-Pacific in the absence of an all pervasive security treaty or a regional cooperation agreement such as the NATO. As examined in the preceding chapters, the US in Asia has resorted to a hub and spoke model of regional security driven by the San Francisco System where it has prioritised individual security treaties with nation states. This security architecture concretised by the US during the Cold War continued even at the end of the Cold War. It failed to factor in the rise of China and strategic consequences of the same on nations of Indo-Pacific. The Chinese took advantage of absence of a regional security architecture and began to become aero-navally assertive in Indo-Pacific and on land with India at the Line of Actual Control. The region of Indo-Pacific is in a dilemma. The dilemma is that how is the political



economy of Indo-Pacific going to unfold in coming years. The question before many Indo-Pacific nation states is that whether the growing economic interdependencies of nations with China will provide a ballast for establishing political, security cooperation and thus leading to a regional and pan-Asian security consensus as a new treaty or a minilateral or a multilateral? Or will the absence of a regional security architecture, which is all inclusive, and not exclusive such as QUAD and AUKUS accentuate the strategic rivalries, distrust and prevent any political integration, which normally is the outcome of economic integration? These questions are likely to shape the future responses of India in Indo-Pacific and define its identity in the Indo-Pacific.

## **COLD POLITICS AND HOT ECONOMICS IN INDO-PACIFIC**

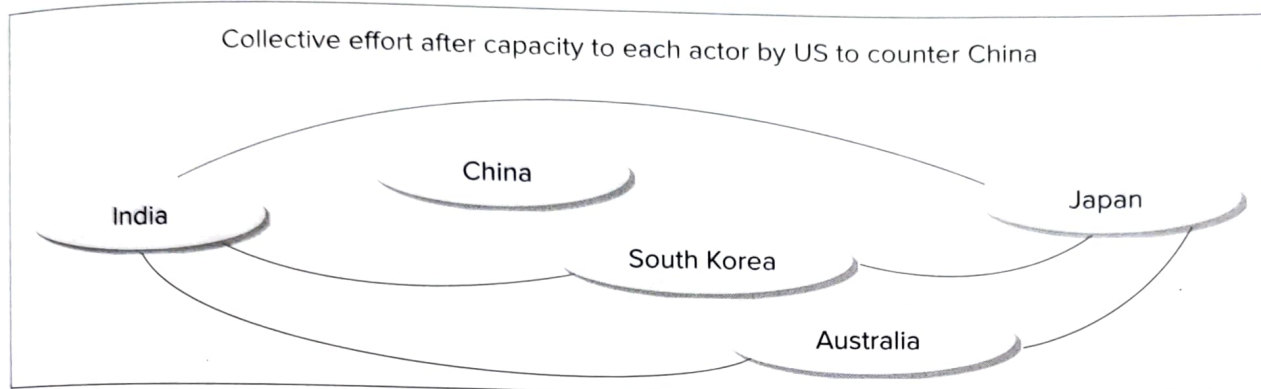
In the preceding section we argued that economic integration will lead to political integration. In Europe, the democracy had been a binding factor in bringing the NATO as a force to counter the communist regimes. In this sense, the US was able to use NATO as a tool to counter the Soviet Union. In Asia, while many countries are democracies and they are well aligned to the democratic agenda of the US, there are many nations such as Thailand and Brunei which are autocratic and are aligned with the US. Then there is an autocratic China which is on opposing side of the US, its friends and allies. The biggest challenge that the US is facing today can be seen on two fronts. Firstly, it does want to be a dominant player of providing regional security in the Indo-Pacific. But the challenge for the US is that none of the nations in the Indo-Pacific have economic interdependencies with the US as they have with China. In this sense, the US is quite reluctant to build a security architecture where it can gain and offer regional security like in Europe. The biggest advantage that the US had during the Cold War in Europe was that they were able to forge NATO with economic components and aid the rebuilding of states after the World War II. However, in case of Indo-Pacific today, the countries here are way too deeply integrated with China and thus, there is little economic incentive for the US to provide regional security. Secondly, as argued previously, the motivating factor for the US in NATO in Europe was that the nations were bound by the framework of democracy and the US found it more conducive to engage with democratic regimes than with non-democratic ones in Europe in particular. Today, in order to cover up for the economic incentive logic the US often states that the reason why it is unable to offer a regional security architecture of NATO types in Indo-Pacific is because of differing political systems in nation states of Indo-Pacific. This however makes no sense because despite differing political systems between the US and the Middle-Eastern states, the Americans during the Cold War had created regional security architectures like Baghdad Pact. In this sense, what clearly explains the reluctance of the US to build an all pervasive regional security architecture in Indo-Pacific, despite the rise of China as a strategic threat to the US, its friends and allies, is the absence of an economic incentive for the Americans because the nations of the Indo-Pacific are economically intertwined with China. A benevolent hegemon that can act as a nucleus of regional security in Indo-Pacific will remain missing for the time being.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN INDO-PACIFIC AND NETWORK MODEL OF BALANCING**

In the security, strategic and economic scenario outlined above, the question arises that what are the implications of this state of flux in Indo-Pacific on Indian foreign policy. Since the 1990s, there has been a concerted attempt of the US to improve its relationship with India. During the Cold War period, owing to ideological differences and American insistence on hyphenation of India and Pakistan and their overt tilt to Pakistan acted as serious hindrances between India and the US. The relations between India and the US began to improve since the end of the Cold War and defence cooperation was one of the first dimensions. The Americans positioned themselves as a reliable defence equipment supplier to India after the decline of Soviet. This enabled India to use the American umbrella to build up ties in Indo-Pacific with Japan, Australia and South Korea. In 2000s, after the 9/11, there was a growing realisation in the American strategic thinking that the rise of China is likely to alter balance of power of Asia. In this context, the Americans, in 2005, decided to give India a nuclear deal and enhanced the defence, security and nuclear cooperation. The American policy was driven by an attempt to rebalance the power equations by enhancing the capacities and capabilities of its own friends and allies in Indo-Pacific. The American policy was touted as the 'Pivot to Asia' or 'Rebalancing Initiative'. This policy has seen more deepening of India and the US ties under the recently concluded agreements such as LEMOA, COMCASA and BECA. It is equally important to understand that the US rebalancing had accepted the rise of China as matter of fact and all its



generosity to its friends and allies was more driven by the attempt of maintaining its own strategic position of a global hegemon through economic opportunities in Indo-Pacific. The US, in its 'Pivot to Asia' programme not only strengthened bilateral capacities of its friends and allies but also encouraged them to build a network of proximity amongst themselves so that there can be higher levels of interoperabilities. The US since then has created a new network model of balancing to tackle the rise of China. This network model (see the diagram below) incorporates minilateral, mini-networks such as QSD and AUKUS, as analysed in preceding sections.



In this new network model of minilaterals, India is rising as a new middle power with aspiration of playing a bigger role and achieve a higher international status in the world. From the discussion here, it is now clear that implications of the US network model on Indian foreign policy is clear. India will continue to deepen relations with states in the Indo-Pacific to seek capital, technology and partners that will support India's growth so that India can achieve a leading power status. As the US, after AUKUS, is now going to be a dominant power in Indo-Pacific, India is likely to enter the embrace of the US and the gaps between India and the US relations will melt down even further. The Chinese will be difficult to isolate in the region. But with AUKUS, as the US will now be more deeply present in the Indo-Pacific, the Chinese will use their Belt and Road Initiative to reduce their sea-borne presence and focus more on seeking energy and resource supplies from Middle-East (and then via CPEC to China through land route and thus avoid maritime routes) and Europe. India's engagements with the US will also have its own limitations because the Chinese will use Pakistan and precarious border issue with India where it resorts to salami slicing to bog down India. The US will not be able to do anything if Chinese divert the waters of Indus and Brahmaputra for their use and create ecological security threats for India or resort to salami slicing and territorial grabs, an ongoing strategy in Ladakh since 2020. Thus, even in case of a US-dominated scenario in the Indo-Pacific, there would be limitations of India and the US engagements. India would try to balance out these limitations of the US policy on Indian security by taking independent stands on international issues under the garb of strategic autonomy, as visible in India's stand on Ukraine crisis in 2022. In any scenario, the only logical strategy for India to follow without being confrontational to China, Pakistan and without becoming upset of the full US support is to grow its economy aggressively. As the Indian economic pie will grow, India will have to divert the economic resources to resort to modernise its military and narrow down the military gaps with China and thus balance off a future full-scale military confrontation with China. The government of India's thrust on an Atmanirbhar Bharat and subsequent economic policy architecture has to be seen in this strategic perspective.



# 5

CHAPTER

## India's Strategic and Economic Relations with Japan

### INDIA AND JAPAN RELATIONS: MANAGING SECURITY AND ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCIES IN ASIA

The new canvas and cauldron of international relations and economic diplomacy is Asia. The parallel economic rise of India and China has renewed debates on geopolitics in Indo-Pacific. The active presence of Japan in the region has added an additional element of peace and direction in the international relations unfolding in Indo-Pacific. In the newly unfolding multipolar world and Asia, the fault lines are seen in the maritime and littoral realm and the linking of Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean under the Indo-Pacific realm is resurrecting the geopolitics. Consequent to the rise of Indo-Pacific is rising dependence on sea trade, resources and communication which has transformed the perceptions of traditional military threats to environmental dimensions as well. Although the economic rise of Asia is multidimensional and promising, the intersection of geopolitical and geographic risks associated with unchecked models of economic growth pose new challenges for the Indo-Pacific. In this sense, the Pacific century is focussed on littoral states and securing freedom of navigation is the dominant focus. The difference between the 20th and the 21st century lies in the heart of geography because the 20th century Europe was a landscape and the 21st century Asia is a seascape. In this backdrop, the strategic space for India to navigate the Indo-Pacific has not only grown wider but also more complex. The India and Japan relations have to be traced in this emerging context.

### INDIA'S CORE INTERESTS IN ENGAGING WITH JAPAN

Japan and India have an ancient relationship, with Buddhism acting as a common connecting factor. During the era of the ancient Silk Route, Buddhism spread to China from India. From China, Buddhism also spread to Korea and Japan. There was a dip in Indo-Japan relations during medieval times. Yet, the cultural engagement at the level of Buddhism continued. During the World War II, Subhash Chandra Bose formed close ties with the Japanese in his bid to wage a war on the British army. Bose's Indian National Army (INA) was the brainchild of Japanese Major (and post-war Lieutenant General) Iwaichi Fujiwara, head the Japanese intelligence unit Fujiwara Kikan and had its origins, first in the meetings between Fujiwara and the president of the Bangkok chapter of the Indian Independence League, Pritam Singh Dhillon. Through Pritam Singh's network, the recruitment by Fujiwara of a captured British Indian army captain, Mohan Singh on the western Malayan peninsula in December 1941 also contributed to the cause as Fujiwara's mission was "to raise an army which would fight alongside the Japanese army". After the initial proposal by Fujiwara the Indian National Army was formed because of discussion between Fujiwara and Mohan Singh in the second half of December 1941, and the name chosen jointly by them in the first week of January 1942. The INA's first commitment during the the World War II was in the Japanese thrust towards Eastern Indian frontiers of Manipur. INA's special forces, the Bahadur Group, were extensively involved in operations behind enemy lines both during the diversionary attacks in Arakan, and the Japanese thrust towards Imphal and Kohima, along with the Burmese National Army led by Ba Maw and Aung San. The Japanese also took possession of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 1942 and a year later, the Provisional Government and the INA were established in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands with A. D. Loganathan appointed its Governor General. The islands



were renamed Shaheed and Swaraj. However, the Japanese Navy remained in essential control of the island's administration. However, Japan's funding for the INA gradually dwindled and the army was forced to pull back, being defeated in crucial battles and finally capitulating to the British army. This was followed by Japan's defeat and eventual capitulation in the World War II after the US dropped nuclear bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Post-independence, it was in the year 1952 that India and Japan concluded a Treaty of Peace and Friendship, laying the foundation of India's new diplomatic relations with Japan. However, we need to remember that relations between the two during the Cold War were not warm. One of the key reasons was the ideological difference, which separated the two. India, during the Cold War, was an advocate of non-alignment. Japan, on the other hand, after the World War II, concluded the Treaty of San Francisco with the USA and tilted towards the capitalist orientation as Japan was economically weak and was undertaking economic reconstruction after the war. India supported Japan with the supply of iron ore. In return, India regularly got economic aid from Japan in the form of ODA (Overseas Developmental Assistance, also at times called Official Developmental Assistance). In fact, by 1986, Japan emerged as the largest economic aid donor to India. During the Cold War, when India faced conflicts with China in 1962 and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, the foreign policy stance of Japan towards India remained very neutral. The Japanese never supported India, nor supported its opponents, and chose to not take sides. But somehow, Japan being a follower of the US camp in the Cold War, was always uncomfortable with India's tilt to the USSR post-1971. Because of the domestic ferment and problems India had during the Cold War, Japan always perceived India as a chaotic and desperately poor nation, having no potential to be a partner in the near times. Because of successive conflicts between India and its neighbours between 1962 and 1971, the Southeast and the East Asian states branded India as needlessly aggressive. In 1967, when the Southeast Asians created the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), they did not include India to be a part of the group, which also contributed to India's larger exclusion from that part of the world. However, things did improve between India and Japan after the end of the Cold War. The ending of the Cold War brought about a radical shift in the world policy as also Indian Foreign Policy. India began to improve its relations with the USA. This also led India to improve its relations with other allies of the USA, including its most important partner in the East, Japan. In the first few years in the post-Cold War period, India began improving its relations with Japan, but the progress was short lived as in 1998, India carried out another nuclear test and positioned itself as a nuclear weapon state. After the test, Japan became a vocal critique of India at the regional and international level. Japan even went on to cut its economic aid to India. It was natural for Japan to condemn such foreign policy behaviour as it had been the only nation in the world to have witnessed the horror of an atomic bomb attack first-hand. Post-World War II, Japan has become a very peaceful nation with an acute abhorrence of atomic and nuclear bombs. It perceived the Indian nuclear test as an insult to the growing relationship. Thus, post-1998, India saw a dip in its relations with Japan. However, the US, which was also initially upset about India's nuclear testing, saw the test as an opportunity to improve its relationship with India at the level of nuclear commerce. The USA also convinced its allies, including Japan, not to be negative about the Indian nuclear tests. Consequently, in 2000, of the Japanese Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro conducted a state visit to India. Mori asserted that India and Japan would become Strategic Partners in future. This visit led to the birth of a new partnership between the two that has continued from 2000 to the present. The beauty of the Indo-Japan relationship has been that it is moving in an upward trajectory reaching new heights, which we can now explore in themes ahead. The core interests of India today include

- Domestic diplomacy
- Systemic diplomacy
- Individual diplomacy
- Nuclear diplomacy
- Defence diplomacy
- Checkmate China diplomacy
- Development through two plus one diplomacy

## DOMESTIC FACTORS AND PERSONALITY POLITICS IN INDIA AND JAPAN

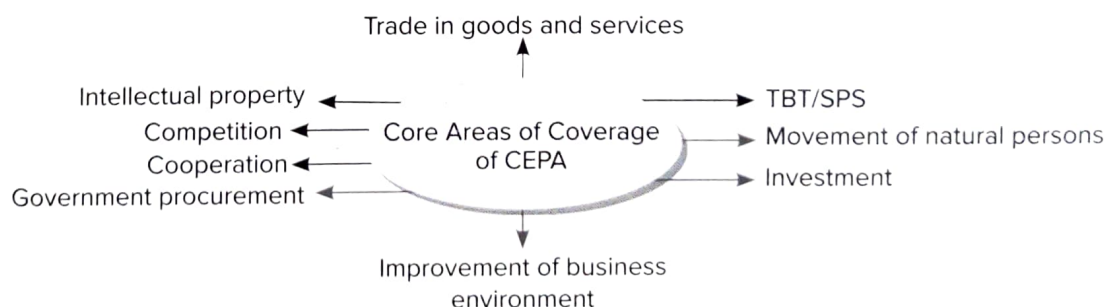
In Japan, many studies had been conducted which said that approximately by 2050, Japan may be pushed on the verge of zero per cent economic growth because of an aging population that is moving towards a demographic disadvantage. To mitigate this challenge, Japan has, in recent times eased up its immigration policies, allowing the entry of skilled professionals.



Therefore, this is one area where India and Japan have an interaction as a lot of skilled members of the Indian population are now looking at Japan as a viable option to support Japanese economic growth. Further, with coming of Shinzo Abe in Japan, we have a unique Japanese economic revival happening under a conceptual framework called Abenomics (Abe + economics). Abenomics is a unique blend of fiscal, monetary and structural reforms, which Shinzo Abe is aggressively pursuing in Japan. It is again in this context that India and its corporate sector today sees a vibrant opportunity in Japan. This is also coupled with a perception, which Japan has of India as a knowledge superpower, while perceiving China to be a cheap commodity superpower. The Japanese ODA is put to use in infrastructure projects in India such as the Delhi Metro, the Delhi–Mumbai Industrial Corridor, the Dedicated Freight Corridor and the Bangalore–Chennai expressway. Thus, at domestic levels, India and Japan collectively complement each other. Foreign policy experts have commented that India–Japan relations are classic example of Prime Minister-driven relationship. In recent times, both Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi have infused enormous political energy in the relations with Shinzo Abe. Both leaders from India have jointly emphasised upon the establishment of a Single Seamless Asian Whole and the creation of ‘Arc of Freedom,’ leading to an alliance of these two leading democracies. The idea is to establish a seamless paradigm for free movement of navy, trade capital, finance and people between India and Japan.

## COMMERCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMACY OF INDIA AND JAPAN IN ERA OF INDO-PACIFIC

India and Japan had limited commercial ties during the Cold War. The rise in bilateral commercial relations is a post-Cold War phenomenon. However, relations at the commercial level had existed even before the World War II. At the end of the Edo Era, the Japanese ports were opened for commerce and its trade relations with India began. With the opening of the ports Japanese industries began to import Indian cotton yarn. The trading merchants in Bombay opened more shipping lines with merchants in Yokohama. As the World War II ended and India became independent, Japan began to export machinery and metal products to India while importing iron ore from India. The imported iron ore was used by Japan to mitigate material shortages it was facing in its domestic steel industry. Though Japan had been also providing ODA to India, during the Cold War its overall quantum had got reduced. Japan gradually started importing more iron ore from Brazil and Australia than India. It was in 1981 that India initiated partial economic liberalisation, with the process completed in 1992. In 1984 Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone visited India and doubled the total amount of ODA. In the 1980s, Japan began to import diamond and prawns from India. As the Cold War ended and India embarked upon full economic liberalisation, a new chapter in the bilateral trade opened up. In November 2004, India and Japan established a Joint Study Group (JSG) to explore the possibility of a CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement). The JSG held four meeting from July 2005 to April 2006. In December 2006, it was decided to establish a negotiation mechanism. From January 2007 to September 2010, 14 rounds of negotiations were held and in September 2010, an agreement in principle was arrived upon. On 16th February 2011 India and Japan concluded the CEPA. The CEPA gives India access to a 5-trillion-dollar GDP while giving Japan an access to more business opportunities in India. India feels the CEPA is an alliance between Japanese technology and Indian labour force. As per the CEPA, by 2012, for trade in goods 94% tariffs were eliminated between India and Japan on a trade value basis.



During Indian Prime Minister's visit to Japan in 2014, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe committed 35 billion dollars' worth investments to India till 2019. India exports petroleum products, chemicals, fish, clothing and machinery to Japan while it imports electrical machinery, transport equipment, plastic materials and precision instruments. Japanese

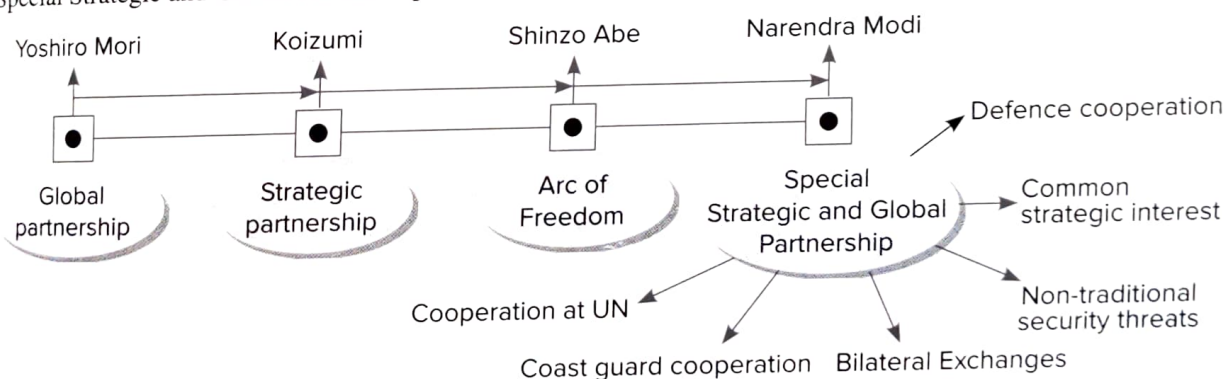


FDI to India is mainly limited to the automobile and pharmaceutical sectors. With a red carpet for Japanese investors under the Modi government, the trade relations are bound to increase in future. The Indian Prime Minister, along with his Japanese counterpart, visited the FANUC Corporation in 2018. The visit to FANUC was very significant as India was gearing up to the Industrial Revolution 4.0 where it intended to leverage IoT, Artificial intelligence, robotics and 3D printing for industrial enhancement. Despite the fact that India and Japan have a CEPA (signed in 2011, a comprehensive deal covering trade in goods and services along with IPR and movement of persons), the trade is sluggish (due to inadequate infrastructure, land acquisition issues in India confronted by the Japanese and complex taxation mechanisms in India). There are cultural and punctuality issues that hinder India and Japan economic cooperation. India imports machinery and iron and steel while exporting petroleum products and non-metallic mineral ware.

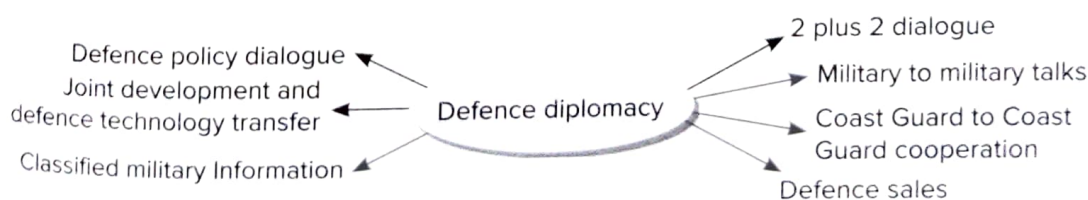
In September 2017, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited India for the 12th India–Japan Annual Summit. During the visit, the two countries discussed a Maritime Security Pact and decided to institutionalise a Maritime Security Dialogue to take forward the Maritime Affairs Dialogue (signed in 2013). The Japanese Prime Minister officially launched Asia–Africa Growth Corridor and inaugurated the Mumbai–Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project. The project heralds a new era of safety, speed and service and will help the Indian railways craft a pathway to becoming a global leader in scale, technology and skill. The MAHSR works on an attractive low-cost long-term financing model. Japan will be providing a soft loan of 90,000 crore rupees to India at an interest rate of 0.1% over 50 years. The re-payment of the loan is to begin after 15 years of receiving the loan. There have been criticisms that such a high-speed train in a poverty-stricken India is elitist and India can do without it. Such criticisms were there even in 1969, when the first ever Rajdhani Express was launched from Howrah to Delhi. However, leapfrogging technology and development with elitism is unwarranted at this stage.

## THE INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGIC BINDERS BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN

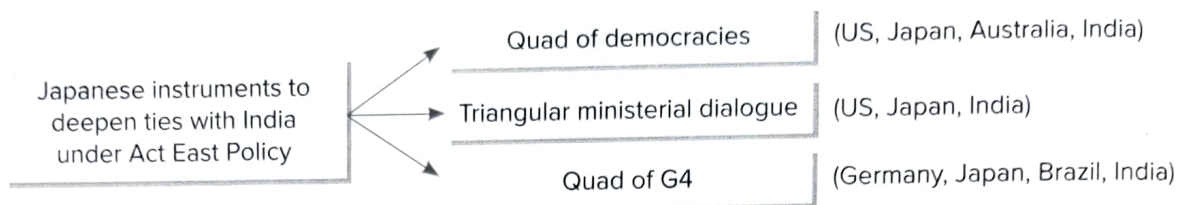
The origin of the defence diplomacy between India and Japan could be traced back to the year 2000 when Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori visited India and envisaged a global partnership with India. In 2007 Shinzo Abe envisaged the confluence of the two seas and establishment of an arc of freedom and prosperity, which saw its final culmination in 2014 in a Special Strategic and Global Partnership.



Under the Act East Policy, the most crucial connector between India and Japan has been maritime cooperation. The two sides have a Maritime Security Dialogue since 2013. The most unique feature of this maritime cooperation is that it incorporates not only naval cooperation but commercial maritime activities as well. In 2015, India and Japan concluded Agreement on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology Cooperation. This agreement would provide India with advanced defence technology for the purposes of research and development. As the Indian defence market opens up, Japanese defence players will see rising presence in India. India has declared Japan as a privileged market partner in Make in India programme.



Japan has opened up its defence sector, as envisaged in the 2018 National Defence Programme Guidelines (NDPG). The recent past has seen bilateral military exercises, the 'Dharma Guardian-2019' (between the Indian Army and Japanese Ground Self-Defence Forces), the 'SHINYUU Maitri-2019' (between Japanese Air Self-Defence Force and the Indian Air Force) and also the trilateral Malabar exercise by India, Japan and the US. India and Japan concluded their maiden '2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting' (started in 2014) in New Delhi on November 30, 2019, and it was just ahead of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to India in mid-December for the 14th India–Japan Annual Summit (which got postponed due to anti-CAA protests in India).



Japan has effectively used multiple 'minilateral' forums (as visible in the diagram above) to boost its ties with India. The Quad of G-4 has been used to collectively seek a UN Security Council Seat. Similarly, the Triangular Ministerial Dialogue was used as a mechanism not only to promote public opinion and dialogue but also to foster maritime cooperation. The reinterpretation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution allows Japan to boost strategic cooperation with India. The amended Article 9 (since September 2015) allows Japan to send military aid to friendly states (that includes India) if they come under attack from another state. This amendment has opened up new avenues of strategic diplomacy between India and Japan.

## MALABAR EXERCISE—A CONCERT AT THE SEAS TO AVOID THE THUCYDIDES TRAP

In 2017, Indian Navy (IN) collaborated with Japan and the US to carry out the Malabar exercises. During the Cold War, IN remained isolated due to the non-alignment. Though Soviet Union did provide India with naval hardware, but, no professional interaction happened between IN and Soviet Navy during the Cold War. IN remained clung to the outdated doctrines of NATO. When the USSR disintegrated, India lost all inhibitions of non-alignment and decided to embrace the post-Cold War world order with a new confidence. The US dispatched the Pacific Army commander General Claude Kicklighter who proposed the US–India military to military cooperation in 1991. India and the US did a naval drill in 1992 for the first time. This naval drill led to the birth of the Malabar exercise between India and the USA. Malabar provided the IN with new insights into tactics, doctrines and warfare techniques. As the Malabar exercises progressed, Japan entered the scene in 2016 and thereby made Malabar a trilateral format. The naval cooperation of India has moved out of the orbit of non-alignment to enter into the new mutant of non-alignment that is strategic autonomy. Malabar exercises are an attempt by India to avoid a Thucydides trap. Thucydides said that it was the rise of Athens that led to fear in the mind of Sparta, leading to the war. Today the Indian foreign policy, in order to avoid the Thucydides trap is cooperating with Japan and the US to establish a favourable regional balance of power. The 2017 Malabar exercise gave an insight to the IN to benefit from the diverse operational expertise. As China acquires bases in the Indian Ocean and enhances its presence in India's backyard, the Malabar exercises provide the IN an opportunity to establish a triad which could manifest as a mega trilateral balancer in the region.

## DEMOCRATIC SECURITY DIAMOND IN INDO-PACIFIC

Shinzo Abe has also proposed a 'Democratic Security Diamond' involving Japan, India, the US and Australia. The Diamond shall be the guardian of maritime security from the Indian Ocean to western Pacific. One of the reasons why Japan has proposed the Diamond is because of declining the US power in the region. As China becomes assertive and the US witnesses a gradual decline in its power in Asia, Japan intends to fill the void with a partnership with other democratic Asian states. The National Security strategy of Japan announced in 2013 had also included India as a primary driver in maintaining the balance of power in Asia disturbed by a rising China. Japanese scholar Dr. Satoru Nagao has stressed that countries



in the Indo-Pacific region are in the midst of a security dilemma regarding their maritime projection and are countering this by up scaling production of submarines, which are considered symbols of tackling statist threats. He emphasised that the coastal countries around the East China Sea have increased the number of submarines in their naval arsenal in the light of the changing power balance between the US and China. Speaking at the conference on 'India-Japan Partnership in the Changing Asian Strategic Scenario', organised on March 18, 2016, he further asserted that to mitigate the threat of assertiveness China, Japan should cooperate at the defence level with India, which is also another rising power in Asia. One of the key areas of identified cooperation is at the maritime level. India has decided to buy 12 US-2 Amphibian aircrafts from Japan. The defence cooperation, while being on the rise, has also brought some concerns. Japan is concerned about its intellectual property in defence technology transfers. India has convinced Japan of its stellar reputation in preventing breaches of intellectual property. Though the US will remain the nucleus of Japan's security policy, India has emerged in the ambit of Japan as a crucial player for Asian security.

## NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN

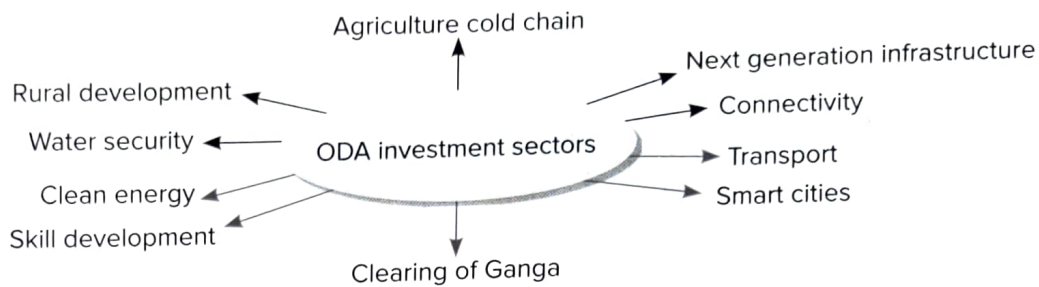
In November 2016, at an annual bilateral summit, India and Japan concluded a nuclear deal, which was being negotiated since 2010. The successful conclusion of the deal will provide India access to the Japanese nuclear market as well as their technology. During the negotiation stage, Japan had been insisting that India sign the NPT and the CTBT. India, on the other hand, convinced Japan of its good track record in non-proliferation as well as a self-imposed moratorium on further nuclear testing. India, thus, concluded the deal without being a signatory to the NPT. They have signed an additional document called a 'Note' on views and understanding as per which if India violates its self-imposed moratorium, and then Japan has the right to terminate nuclear cooperation with India. The termination of the deal shall not be up-front. There will be a joint security assessment to analyse the reasons that compelled India to undertake the nuclear testing in the first place. This would be followed by a safety assessment where they would determine the impact on the safety of the facility in case supplies are stopped. This would be followed by the clause of right to return. As per the clause, Japan, at its own cost, will seek a return of the material supplied to India. As per the deal, Japan will give a one-year notice to India before ending nuclear cooperation if India tests a nuclear weapon. India has already signed deals with France, Russia and the USA. As a majority of the nuclear parts were made by Japan, in the absence of a deal with Japan, India found it tough to order nuclear technology from the US, France and Russia. As firms like GE, Westing house and Areva have stakes in Hitachi, Mitsubishi and Toshiba, the Indo-Japan deal will now open up business opportunities in India for all of them. India used the Indo-US nuclear deal as a template while designing the clause related to reprocessing. India has the right to reprocess at sites, which are under the safeguards put in place by the IAEA by signing the nuclear deal with Japan. Japan not only has some very advanced nuclear technologies but also is a reliable player, as it is known for not imposing additional ties. As the two countries take their relations to global strategic partnership level, the nuclear deal will help the two achieve the dream of Asian G-2.

## TOKYO DECLARATION AND TWO-PLUS-TWO DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN

The Indian Prime Minister paid a visit to Japan from 31st August to 3rd September 2014. During the visit, the two nations concluded the Tokyo Declaration. The two sides decided to strengthen bilateral cooperation through various dialogue mechanisms and to use 'two plus two dialogue' involving their foreign and defence secretaries to strengthen security cooperation. The Prime Minister announced establishment of India-Japan Investment Promotion Partnership where the two sides decided to double the inflow of FDI to India over the next five years. Japan also decided to invest 3.5 trillion yen ODA to India in specific sectors. The visit of Indian Prime Minister to Japan in 2014 led to the birth of Tokyo Declaration. The two leaders have taken the bilateral relations to the level of special strategic and global partners. At the defence level in 2014, the leaders had further decided that:

- There shall be regular military and naval exercises between the two nations.
- There shall be a trilateral defence meeting between India, Japan and the USA.
- Japan has lifted the ban on sale of products of defence companies they had imposed after 1998 PNE.
- Japan would sell US-2 amphibian aircrafts to India.

Similarly, Japan has affirmed investments in the 'Plus Five Segment', namely infrastructure transport, smart cities, Ganga cleaning, manufacturing and clean energy. Japan shall also be creating Industrial townships in India. The two have decided to name Varanasi as Kyoto's sister city in the near future.



Japan has committed to develop

- Electronics parks and Japanese-style industrial townships in India
- Various projects in infrastructure, investment, energy and natural resources
- Cooperation in the field of civilian nuclear energy for peaceful uses
- Japan in the next 10 years would train 30,000 Indian youth by setting up a Japan–India institute for manufacturing
- Transfer of defence equipment and technology
- Agreement on protection of classified military information
- To create an infrastructure that would boost connectivity, the two sides decided to synergise the Act East Policy and Japan's partnership for quality infrastructure

## WILL JAPAN LEAVE AMERICAN MONOGAMY AND DRIVE INDO-PACIFIC ORDER WITH INDIA?

Considering that NITI Aayog has given a big push to use IoT, Artificial intelligence, robotics and 3D printing for development in India, the Indo-Japan cooperation can help in leveraging the sectors together. In the summit, India has decided to integrate Ayushman Bharat and Japanese Asia Health and Well-being Initiative to leverage cooperation in medical equipment and hospitals. During the Cold War, India and Japan could not envisage a strategic relationship due to ideological differences. As India followed non-alignment, it emerged as a big tree that gave no shade while Japan focused on economic reconstruction after the World War II and earned a reputation of an economic giant but a political pygmy. In the post-Cold War period, the growing assertiveness of China and the decline of the US power in Asia has prompted proximity between India and Japan as both have realised that they have to defend themselves to tackle China. Both also fear a possibility of G-2 (the US and China) as a new threat. Shinzo Abe has demonstrated capabilities to position Japan as a leading power in Asia while Modi has driven India away from the ideological burden of non-alignment to position India as a leading power by building wide ranging partnerships. The bilateral economic cooperation too has got enhanced under the Act East Policy of India and Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure in Asia (EPQI) of Japan. The newness in the India–Japan relationship is a bilateral decision of the two to form a minilateral coalition to jointly develop Africa (by pooling human and financial capital) under the Asia–Africa Growth Corridor. A strong alliance between India and Japan will not upset the US as both favour Indo-Japan proximity. As the depth in the bilateral diplomatic ties enhance, three questions remain:

- Whether India will enter into an alliance with Japan to promote a stable balance of power in Asia?
- Whether Modi will overcome the bureaucratic inertia to go for an alliance?
- Will Japan leave the monogamy of its alliance with the US and embrace India?

Japan, being a nation in need of rare earth metals, is eagerly exploring the same in China despite the fact that India has a lot of rare earth metals. However, India lacks adequate technology to explore them. This is certainly one area where Japan and India can work jointly in the future.





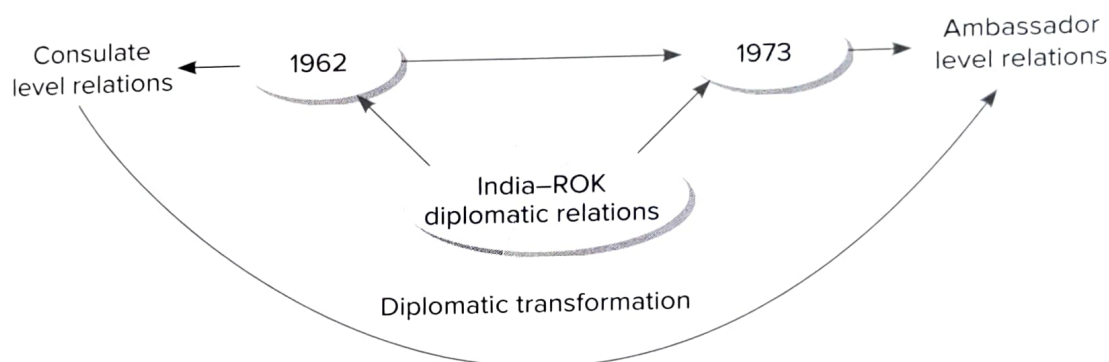
# 6

## CHAPTER

# India's Strategic and Economic Relations with South Korea

## LOCATING THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF SOUTH KOREA IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

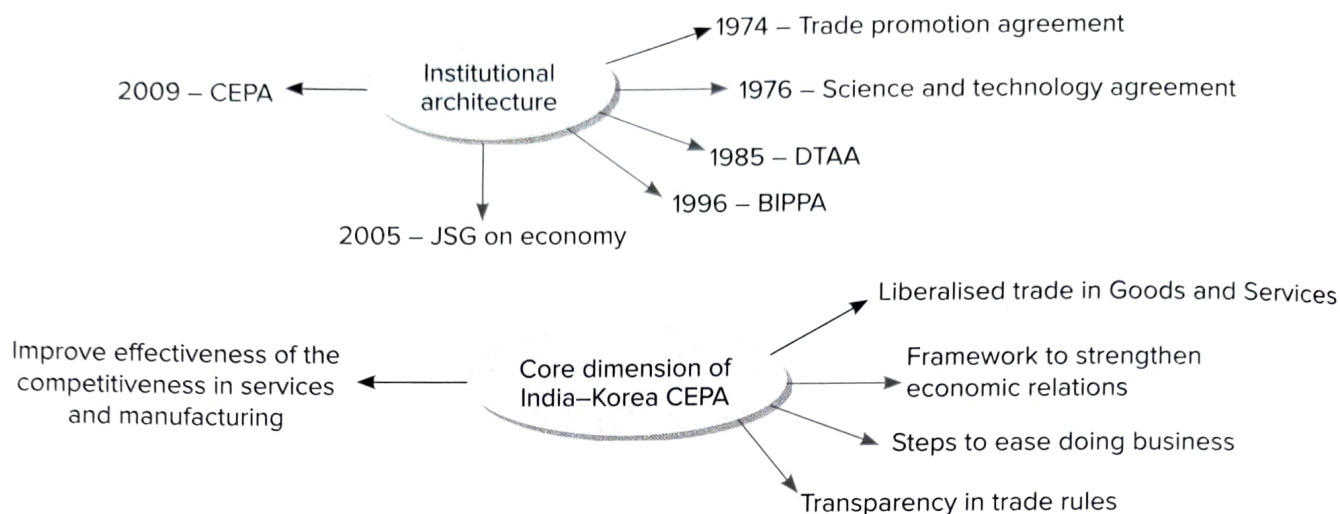
In 1929, in a poem, Tagore wrote "In the golden age of Asia Korea was in of its lamp bearers, and that lamp is waiting to be lit once again for the illumination of the East." These evocative lines by Tagore clearly reflect the vision of the Republic of India about the Republic of Korea (ROK). The connecting factor between India and ROK has always been Buddhism. Ashoka is known to have sent iron and gold from India to Korea to establish Buddhist statues there. In 1947, the UN Temporary Commission on Korea consisting of nine member states was established to hold elections in Korea in May 1948, with India as the Chairman of the Korean Commission.



India played an important role during the period from 1950 to 1953, with North and South Korea finally accepting the Indian-sponsored ceasefire on 21st July 1953. India's diplomacy in 1954 Geneva Conference that officially ended the Korean crises was highly appreciated. As the Cold War entered Asian theatre in the 1950s, India announced non-alignment while ROK chose an alliance with the US and in 1953 signed a mutual defence treaty with the US under the leadership of Rhee Syng Man.

## COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND KOREA PLUS DIPLOMACY WITH INDIA

The Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue envisaging long-term cooperative partnership and matters related to defence and terrorism and so forth were discussed in the dialogue. As the negotiations went on, the two diversified into trade, science and technology, IT and infrastructure. Gradually textiles, oil and gas also came up in energy negotiations and economic cooperation. ROK recognised that India has ready availability of cheap and skilled labour. The ROK began to envisage India as an emerging as a destination where the ROK can invest, manufacture and boost exports to the rest of the world. ROK identified, as per the Indian skill set, automobiles and shipbuilding to work upon.



To enhance economic cooperation, a Joint Study Group (JSG) was established in 2006. The JSG began to explain the potential of a future Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and ROK. The CEPA was concluded in 2009 and came into effect in 2010. As a result of the CEPA, bilateral trade has increased and India has become a top exporter of IT and ITES exports. On the other hand, India is taking advantage of the high-quality steel and heavy machinery imported from Korea. The CEPA has classified 11,200 tariff lines of Korea and 5200 tariff lines of India, which are, put under six broad categories for tariff reduction and elimination. As textiles and agriculture are crucial and sensitive to both, they have been excluded. The CEPA has also led to India expanding in telecom and construction sectors, apart from IT. It also allows movement of professionals, especially at the IT and engineering levels. In 2014, the Ministerial Joint Commission had been recommended creation of India-ROK Joint Trade and Investment Promotion Commission. Taking advantage of CEPA, Honda has set up a plant in Chennai. LG, Visteon Automobiles and Hyundai have also increased their presence in India. Korean investment in India mostly lies in manufacturing just as Indian investment in ROK is in services. In July 2016, India and the ROK decided to launch the Korea+ Platform to boost trade. In order to promote investment, the Korea + acts as a platform that hosts representatives from Korean industry and energy ministries.



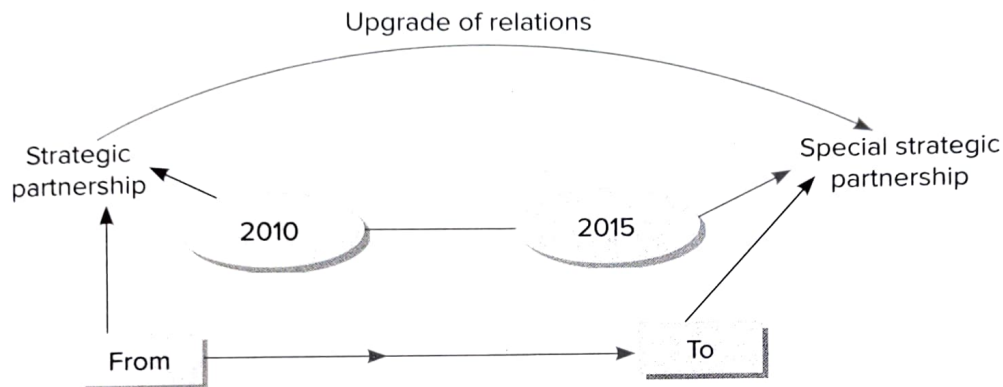
## INDO-PACIFIC AS BINDER OF STRATEGIC COOPERATION OF INDIA AND SOUTH KOREA

The origin of India-ROK Strategic Partnership (SP) owes itself to the visit of Roh Moo Hyun to India in 2004. India and the ROK signed Agreement for Long-Term Cooperation Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in 2004. In 2010, when South Korean President Lee Myung Bak visited India, the relations were transformed and upgraded to the level of strategic partnership. Over a period of time, both had realised the need to cooperate at the strategic level due to the changing balance of power in Asia, thanks to a rising China. The commitment of both for a multipolar and a democratic Asia strengthened their need to cooperate at the strategic level. In 2015, the Indian Prime Minister visited South Korea and upgraded the relation to the level of a Special Strategic Partnership.



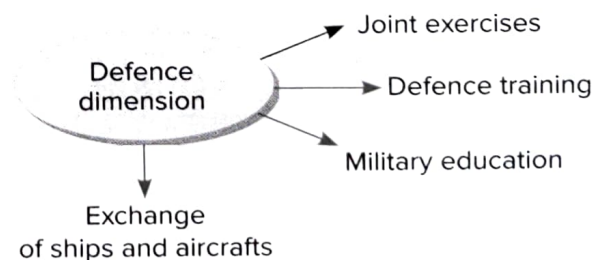


A unique factor of the Special Strategic Partnership is that now the two nations shall undertake a 2+2 dialogue at the Foreign and Defence Ministers' level regularly.



## DEFENCE AND NUCLEAR DIPLOMACY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

In 2011, India and the ROK signed a nuclear deal. Korea is a market leader and is also building nuclear reactors for the UAE. South Korea has been working on fourth generation fast reactors and is making progress in that area. The ROK wants to build reactors for India but India plans to first undertake nuclear research jointly with the country. It would be important to note that India has adopted a wait-and-watch policy over nuclear commerce with the ROK since 2011 as India wants to witness the success of Korean reactors in the UAE (Korean reactors are already very successful in Jordan). Most of the Korean nuclear technology is indigenously manufactured and Korea has successfully used nuclear diplomacy in its foreign policy amongst global players. The year 2005 saw India-ROK sign Agreement on Defence Logistics and Supplies. This increased the bilateral defence visits. In 2010, both signed Agreement on Humanitarian Assistance and Mutual Interest in the defence sector. There is a permanent diplomatic post of a defence attaché in Indian Embassy in Seoul. In 2014, the South Korean President visited India and signed an Agreement on the Exchange of Classified Military Information. This clearly reflects the growing strategic convergence between the two nations. Now, sensitive intelligence and defence information would come to be regularly shared. Since 2014, cyber security has emerged as an important dimension. Korea is a pioneer in shipbuilding and naval combat technology and India has expressed interest to cooperate in this regard. The strategic partnership and defence cooperation are destined to lay down a deep future cooperation.



## SOUTH KOREA: INDIA'S NEW 'SEOUL' MATE IN INDO-PACIFIC REALM

Because of a rising China and its own southbound policy titled as Belt and Road Initiative, the Asian states are witnessing a rise on new nomenclature of policies today. India has initiated 'Act East Policy', South Korea 'New Southern Policy', Japan has initiated 'New Southward Advance' and Taiwan has 'New Southbound Policy'. In the recent times South Korea

has attached greater significance to India in its foreign policy. The recently announced New Southern Policy (NSP) is a testimony to the fact. The NSP is designed to enhance strategic and economic relationship with South East Asian states and India. This is the first ever South Korean official endorsement and documentation of deepening ties with India. The NSP has to be seen in the larger context of the New Northern Policy (NNP). The NNP has been established with the objective of engaging with Russia. The NNP and NSP together is a new cosmic power unleashed by South Korea to engage with states that were never under the radar of South Korea and build a 'balanced diplomacy'. The major difference between India's Act East Policy (AEP) and NSP is that while NSP is purely economic in nature, the AEP has both geostrategic and economic components. For India, South Korea is a shining economic example. In 1960s, South Korea was one of the poorest economies and was able to enter into the wealthy club of OECD in 1996. It is a remarkable transformation where it underwent a movement from poverty to prosperity in one generation, thereby avoiding the 'middle income trap' in which India is stuck as of now. Under the NSP, South Korea, for India, has carried out certain important actions.

1. In the Korean National Diplomatic Academy, South Korea has established a research centre on India.
2. The research centre will identify and theoretically does the ground work for the President on the core areas of strengthening the ties.
3. A New Trade Order Strategy Office in the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy has been created by South Korea to intensify commercial diplomacy with India.

There are four major reasons for South Korea to enhance partnership with India under the NSP.

1. Firstly, South Koreans intend to reduce their economic dependence on the US and China. They have realised that India is one of the important centres of economic gravity that can help South Korea reduce their dependence on the US and China.
2. Secondly, South Korea wants to tacitly push the concept of Indo-Pacific by aligning with India.
3. Thirdly, at the heart of the shift lies the threat of a rising China. South Korea does not perceive the rising China as an opportunity but rather a threat (a survey of South Korean people affirmed this as 41% of the population agrees China is a threat). The recent Chinese forays in the South China Sea; its assertive behaviour on maritime issues and its reluctance to respect international laws of seas has increased fears in South Koreans who perceive that China is an expansionist state.
4. Fourthly, there is domestic reason. South Korean President Moon Jae-In came to power on the promise of democratising the businesses that apparently are owned by large business families in South Korea (called as chaebol). The chaebol have assumed a characteristic of crony capitalism and have been involved in political scandals. Moon was elected on the promise of pushing up bottom up jobs and that is possible only through wider diplomacy with new states, thus NSP and India.

This new approach of South Korea has put India on a strategic footing. It already has a CEPA with South Korea. The NSP of South Korea and Act East Policy of India can now synchronise with each other easily. The two sides can now evolve an understanding to deepen ties from commerce to strategic constructs like the Indo-Pacific to become genuine 'Seoul Mates'.

## INDIA AND SOUTH KOREA: THE NEW SECURITY PROVIDERS

In 2005, POSCO decided to establish a steel plant in India. However, the project, since its inception, has gotten entangled in grassroots activism over land acquisition. In 2008, the Indian Supreme Court also gave a green signal to POSCO to acquire land including land in a forest area for steel plant construction. But the project was further entangled in hurdles with the environment ministry and national green tribunals. Because of the ongoing issues, in July 2015, POSCO had announced its decision to put the project on hold citing an internal decision of the management. The project may not be operational as of now but POSCO still continues to be in India. The prosperity seeks to enhance cooperation for mutual economic growth and economic integration. The peace refers to a denuclearised Korean peninsula that will be conducive for regional and global stability. In order to strengthen the cooperation under the rubric of 3P (People, Prosperity and Peace) for civilisational and cultural tie, the two sides have diplomatic cooperation under the Korea plus initiative, New Southern Policy and India South Korea CEPA.





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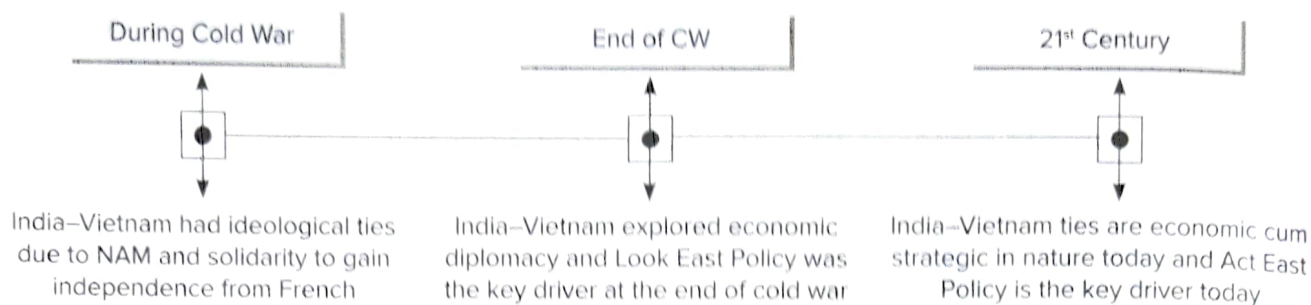
## CHAPTER

# India's Strategic and Economic Relations with Vietnam

### STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF VIETNAM FOR INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

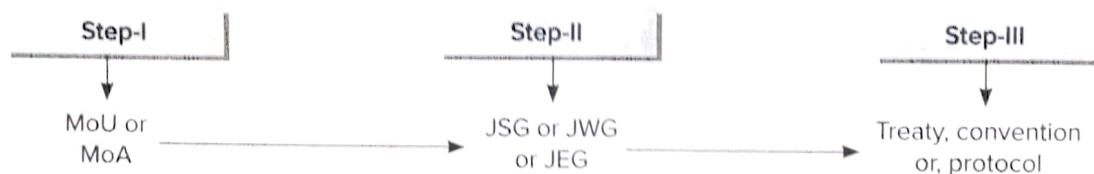
The relations between India and Vietnam go back to the second century BC when Indian traders used to sail from India to the Indo-China region. The trade also led to a spread of Indian culture and ideas to Vietnam. The biggest manifestation of Indian culture is visible in Central and South Vietnam where the Champa Temples stand as testimony to cultural diffusion. The two countries also have commonality at the level of a National Liberation movement for independence. During the World War II, both India and Vietnam (a colony of the French) were able to establish a solid foundation on a common anticolonial plank and non-alignment. During the Cold War, the US–Vietnam War broke out; India showed support and solidarity with Vietnam and condemned the US presence in Vietnam. In June 1966, India advocated an end of bombing by the US in Vietnamese territory and favoured conflict resolution through the Geneva Accords. The US–Vietnam War finally ended in 1972 with the conclusion of the Paris Accords.

India expressed happiness and satisfaction on the conclusion of the US–Vietnam conflict by making positive statements on the floor of the house of the Indian Parliament. In 1972, India and Vietnam established ambassador-level relations and opened up diplomatic ties. Post-unification of Vietnam in 1975, India even supported the Vietnamese Cambodian invasion. It also supported the Vietnamese in their War with China in 1979. During the Cold War period, India and Vietnam remained committed to each other bound by a common ideology of non-alignment. However, they also had their adverse attitude towards the US as another commonality during the Cold War. As the Cold War ended, India initiated a new policy paradigm at the economic and foreign policy level. India also made an internal economic transition of open economy. At the foreign policy level, in 1993, India initiated the Look East Policy (LEP). Under this policy, India decided to integrate itself with South East Asian states. Vietnam was not only an important South East Asian economy but also became a member of the ASEAN. As under the Look East Policy, India began to initiate a dialogue with the ASEAN, and began to use it as a platform to economically engage with Vietnam. In the Ministry of External Affairs of India, a separate division was created for CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam), which provided the needed impetus to propel Indo-Vietnam cultural relations. As India and Vietnam began to explore the commercial dimension in their bilateral diplomacy, a new feature that came up into the Vietnamese foreign policy was its gradual rapprochement with the US. Because of an increasingly powerful Chinese presence, the US has realised the strategic significance of Vietnam in keeping an eye on China. As the US initiated the rebalancing of Asia-Pacific through its Pivot to Asia Policy, Vietnam found its presence in the new strategic calculus. Vietnam is not only a part of the USA's Pivot to Asia, but was also one of the twelve Trans-Pacific Partnership states. Since the end of the Cold War, India–US ties have also improved and the two have even explored a strategic dimension in their bilateral diplomacy. In the context of India and Vietnam, the strategic dimension signifies a strong defence partnership. If India and Vietnam are developing proximity at the strategic level today, then apart from India's Act East Policy, a common factor has been the US need to check a rising China. Thus, India and Vietnam relations have transformed over a period of time from being ideological in nature to economic-cum-strategic in nature today. The diagram below captures the shift in Indo-Vietnam diplomatic ties. India's Act East Policy and Vietnamese Look West Policy seem to be converging at the right point to reshape the Asian Balance of Power.

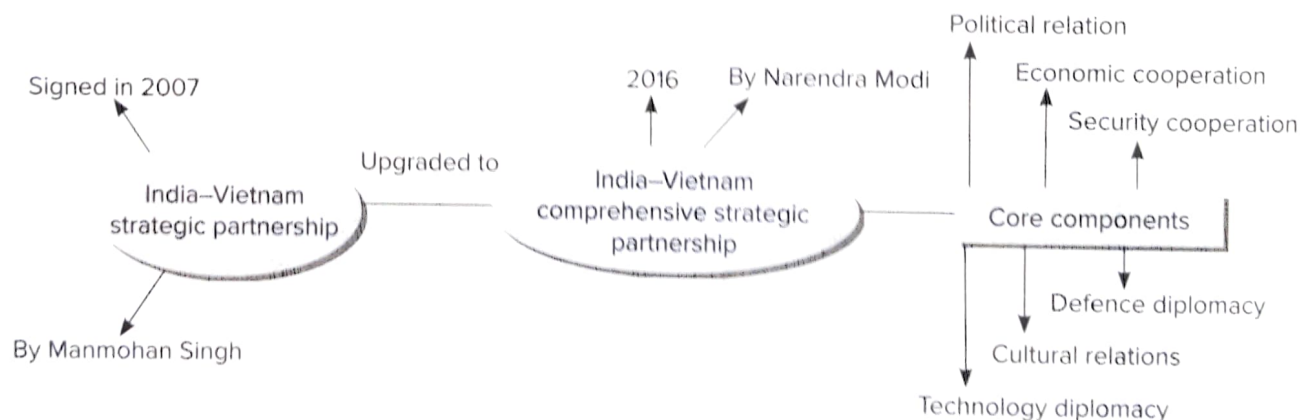


## BUILDING OF STRATEGIC AND SECURITY DIPLOMACY STRUCTURES

In 2007, both sides had signed Strategic Partnership Agreements. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Vietnam in 2016 and held talks with his counterpart Nguyễn Xuân Phúc. During the Indian Prime Minister's visit, both sides elevated their Strategic Partnership to the level of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Whenever two states intend to explore their relationship in a particular dimension, there are multiple diplomatic mechanisms available. Normally the ties move in the direction as depicted below.



However, practically, in diplomacy, it is found that countries do not usually follow the three steps chronologically and often jump from one step to the other directly. India and Vietnam signed MoU on Defence Cooperation in 1995. This MoU led to the conclusion of India–Vietnam Defence Protocol in the year 2000. There are multiple dimensions in the strategic diplomacy between India and Vietnam.

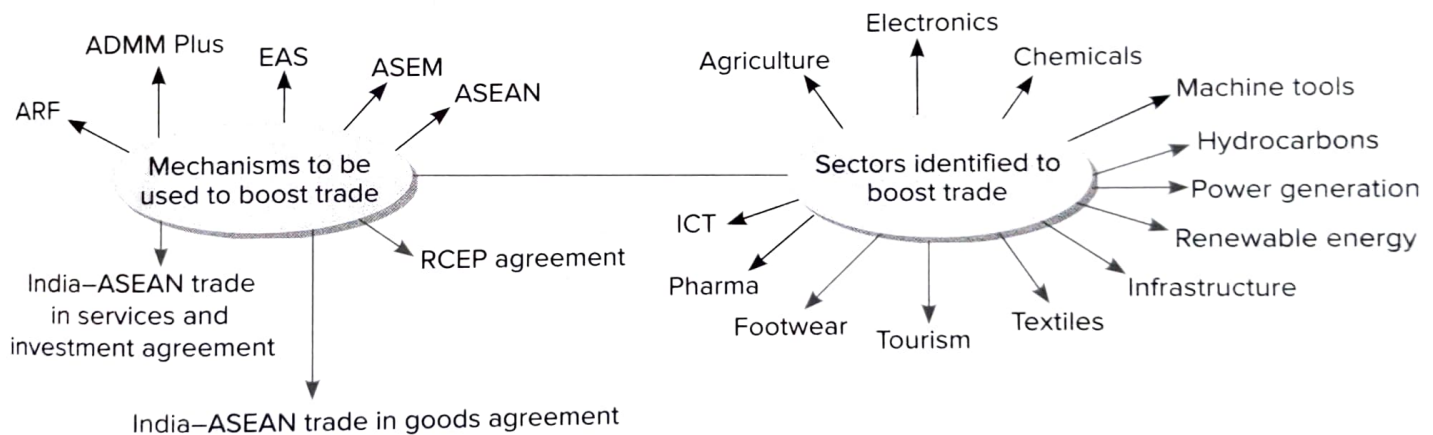


## INDIA'S COMMERCIAL DIPLOMACY TEMPLATE IN INDO-PACIFIC AND VIETNAM MODEL OF COOPERATION

During the Cold War as both India and Vietnam were closed economies, which rendered the commercial angle in diplomacy pretty weak. The end of the Cold War ushered in a resurgent commercial dimension. India and Vietnam almost undertook economic liberalisation simultaneously. This opening up of the economy in Vietnam was called the *Đổi Mới*. A unique feature shared between India and Vietnam is that both the countries in the post-Cold War era have adopted a socialist economy with a tilt towards capitalism. Vietnam cited lack of finance as a reason that hindered bilateral trade with India. As finance became a hindering factor, India decided to assist Vietnam. When a country needs to boost trade, it can use two instruments, that of a loan or a line of credit. Let us take a hypothetical example. Let us



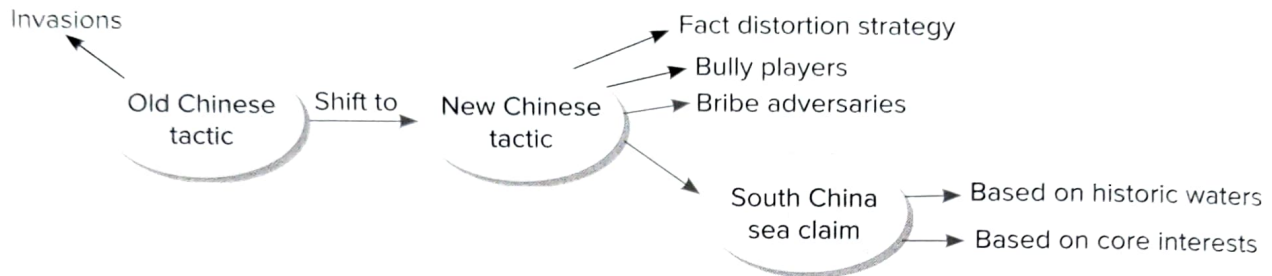
say India decides to give Vietnam a loan of 100 rupees. In case of a loan, the purpose once defined cannot be changed. Thus, loan at times becomes a rigid instrument. It cannot use the unused amount for any purpose other than the stated purpose. But when it comes to the interest repayment, Vietnam shall pay an interest to India on the entire 100 rupees even if it has not used or been able to use the entire amount. Thus, loan becomes a commerce-centric instrument. That is why another instrument used for promoting trade ties is the line of credit. Now, the nation receiving the LOC has the flexibility to use the money for whatever purpose they want. The nation extending the LOC can recommend to the recipient nation on the potential use of the money but the recipient nation has the freedom to use the money for any purpose. Let us assume Vietnam used the 100 rupees LOC to buy a machine for the same purpose as stated above. Let us say, that the machine costs 80 rupees. Now if 20 rupees is the unutilised amount, Vietnam has the flexibility to use it for any purpose, which is not true in case of a loan. In an LOC, the interest is always paid on the amount utilised by the recipient state (that is on 80 rupees). The LOC is a very flexible instrument because if the recipient nation feels that it cannot utilise the entire amount, it has the flexibility to give back the unutilised amount back without the interest. If Vietnam feels that it cannot use the remaining 20 rupees at all, it can return 20 rupees back to India without an interest on the same. Since India had the option of extending a loan or an LOC to Vietnam, India chose to grant Vietnam LOC. India since the end of the Cold War has given 20 lines of credit to Vietnam. It is due to these lines of credits that the bilateral Indo-Vietnam trade is approximately 8.3 billion dollars. India imports machines, phone components, computers, electronic hardware, rubber, chemicals and coffee while it exports meat, fish, corn, cotton and pharmacy products. India has 93 projects going on in Vietnam totaling about one billion dollars. In 1982, India also extended the 'Most Favoured Nation' status to Vietnam. Tata Power is investing 1.8 billion dollars in a 1320 megawatt power project in Nha Trang Province. At the level of capacity building, India, in 2007, established a centre for English language training in Technical University in Nha Trang and a centre for Software development in Ho Chi Minh City. India has been taking FDI to Vietnam primarily in the oil, tea and sugar industries. As India and the ASEAN have an FTA, this forum is also utilised by both India and Vietnam to deepen their engagement at the commercial level. To enhance the bilateral economic ties, achieving trade target of 15 billion dollars by 2020 has been declared as a strategic objective.



## INDIA'S OIL INTERESTS IN VIETNAM, STRATEGIC CLASHES WITH CHINA IN SOUTH CHINA SEA AND INDIA'S STAND

India's presence happened in 1978 when Petroleum minister K. D. Malviya had shown interest in oil from Vietnam. Vietnam privatised their oil and gas sector in 1988. Since then, India's ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) has been undertaking oil cooperation with Vietnam. To facilitate deeper oil cooperation, India's OVL has set up a joint venture with Petro Vietnam primarily for oil exploration. Vietnam has invited India into its exclusive economic zone and continental shelf for oil exploration. India is undertaking oil exploration in offshore blocks number 128, 152 and 153. Indian efforts for oil exploration in South China Sea has not been appreciated by China, which has objected to Indian endeavours in oil exploration in the disputed territory. India has countered Chinese claims by asserting that its presence in South China Sea is legal and it falls within the ambit of Vietnam's EEZ. India has also asserted that its oil exploration in South China Sea is as per India's maritime interest. One of the key maritime interests of India is to retain a favourable geostrategic position.

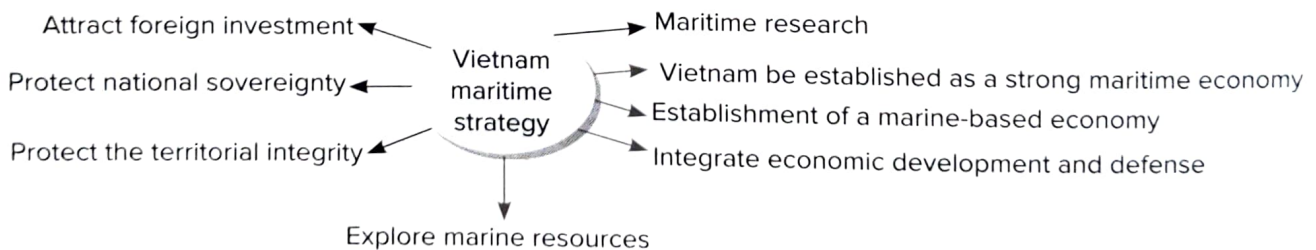
India has maintained that its presence in the South China Sea is not to contain China but for its own economic interests, especially that of its energy security needs. As per United Nations Convention on the Laws of the High Seas (UNCLOS), countries in their EEZ can explore oil, mineral resources, living and non-living natural resources including resources under the sea, seabed and subsoil. Vietnam says that by inviting India to explore oil in its EEZ, it has not done anything illegal. In the South China Sea, the executive economic zone of China and others overlap. The Paracel Islands are claimed by China, Taiwan and Vietnam. The Spratly Islands are claimed by China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Brunei and Philippines. The Scarborough Shoal is claimed by Philippines, China and Taiwan.



Thus, China's increasing ability to decide and expand its role in the South China Sea has not only made the region strategically significant but has also compelled India to re-evaluate its approach on the issue.

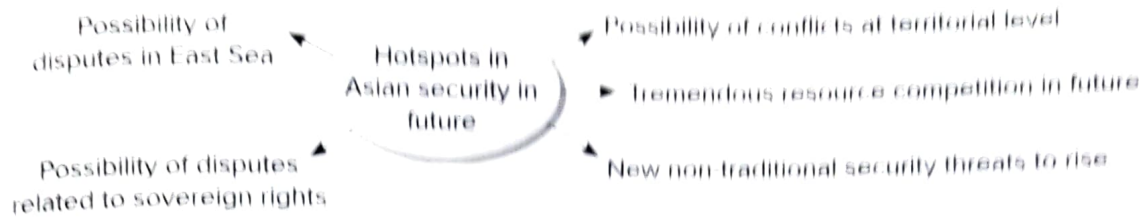
## INDIA AND VIETNAM STRATEGIC COOPERATION MODEL IN INDO-PACIFIC

In recent times, defence diplomacy has gained significant acceptance in Vietnamese foreign policy discourse. Historically, Vietnam, due to its geopolitical location, has always been of maritime significance. The western part of Vietnam is hilly, meaning that the people of Vietnam have to majorly look towards the east for economic development. The east of Vietnam has access to the sea. Out of 64 provinces in Vietnam, 28 are coastal provinces. As the Vietnamese depend heavily on the sea for oil and resources, the countrymen are very susceptible to the dominance of the sea by foreign powers. Vietnam opened up its economy in 1991 and decided to go for economic modernisation through the establishment of a marine-based economy in 1997. Since 1997, maritime thinking has dominated Vietnam. In 2007, the Vietnamese government adopted Vietnamese Maritime Strategy 2020. Vietnam has a modest defence budget of 3.6 billion dollars but in 2007, it surprised the world by announcing a 1.8 billion dollar submarine contract (to purchase 6 kilo class submarines) with Russia. This landmark deal led the scholars of IR to analyse the reasons behind the Russia–Vietnam deal. One of the easiest conclusions that the scholars reached was that the deal is due to the fear of Chinese dominance in South China Sea. China, however, is not the only factor that prompted the deal.

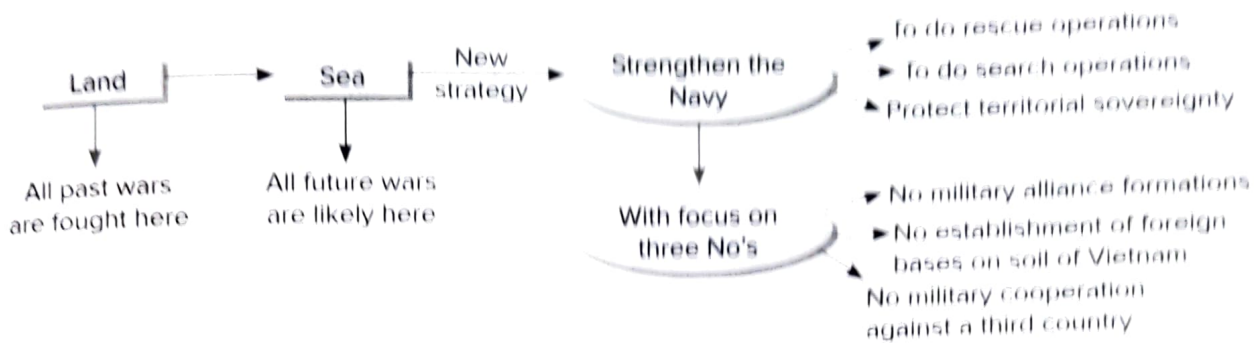


As it is clear from Vietnamese maritime strategy that Vietnam wants to achieve a perfect blend of economic and defence development, as each component is deemed crucial to achieve growth in the other. The government of Vietnam adopted a White Paper on Defence in 2009 where it had identified certain hotspots in Asian security. Larsen and Toubro would work with Vietnam Border Guards for offshore high-speed patrol boats. Vietnam would use the 100 million dollars line of credit provided by India in 2014 for defence procurements.



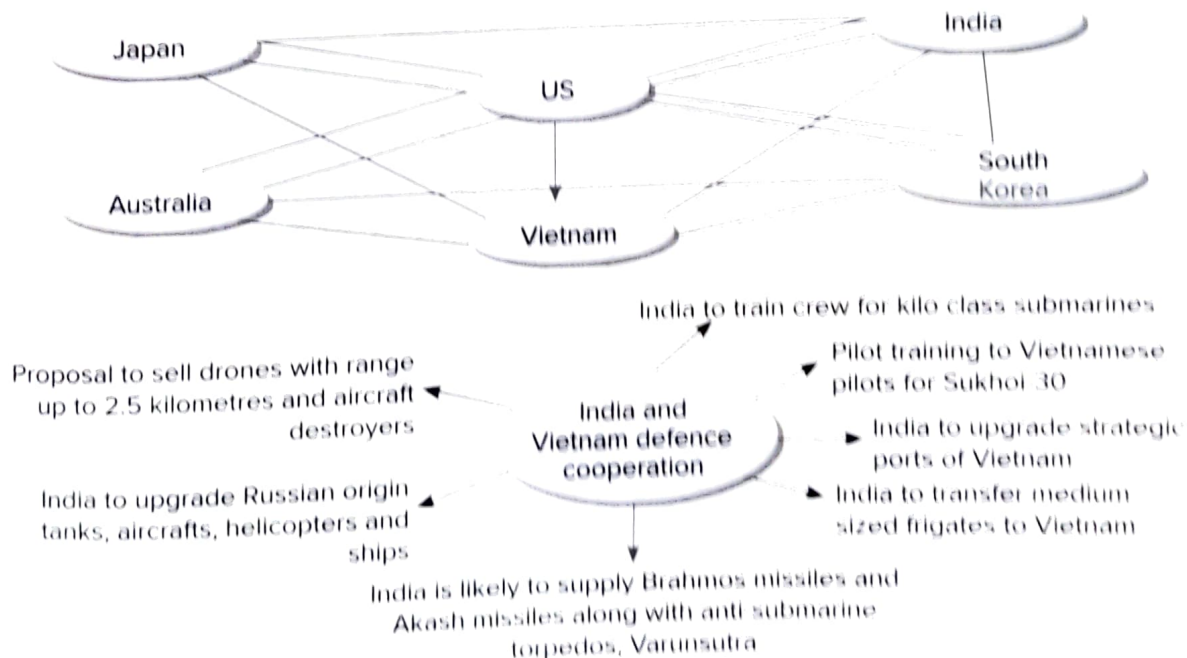


This understanding of hotspots in Asian security in future has compelled Vietnam to undertake a shift.

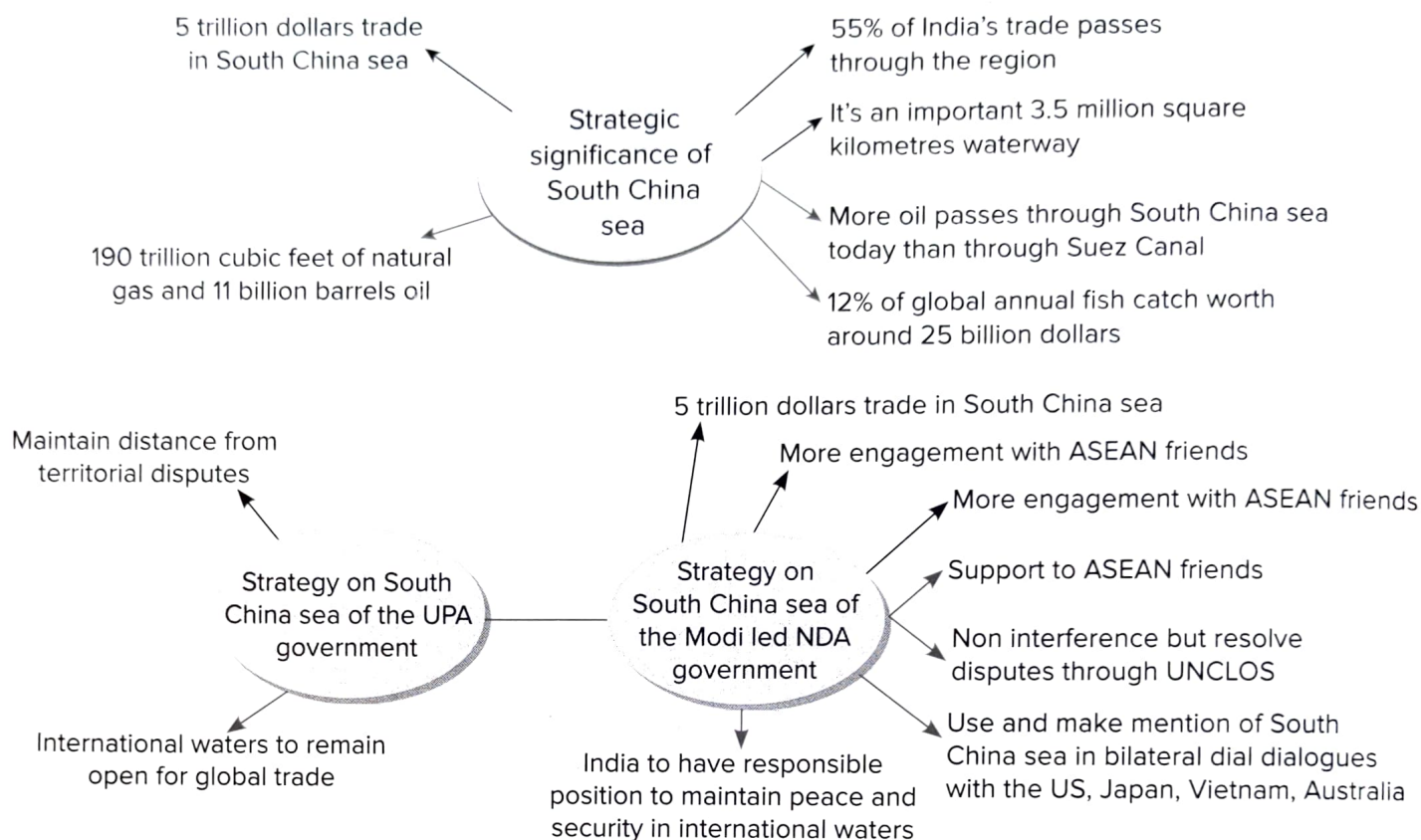


Thus, Vietnam has clarified that its naval modernisation is linked to its domestic economic development. It does not favour any arms race and has no desire or ambition to develop its navy against any third country. It has, however, kept the option open to cooperate with Russia, Japan, the US, India and Australia to assist in its defence modernisation. It is in this context that India has opened up defence diplomacy with Vietnam. In December 2016, India and Vietnam agreed on cooperation in defence and cooperation in peaceful use of atomic energy. The India-Vietnam Defence Cooperation is likely to establish a new Asian Balance of Power. The future Asian security order is therefore likely to differ from old Asian security order.

The old system was based on the US-centric alliances but over a period of time the bilateral alliances have not flourished. This means that, despite the US being a common ally to South Korea, Australia, Japan and Vietnam, it has not yielded much cooperation between these countries. One factor for the absence of such security cooperation is a lack of the US resources to tackle problems in the region. Thus, with changing ground realities, new alliances have to be built up. These new alliances are emerging as minilateral security networks which may culminate as a futuristic collective security centric system. Thus, a new minilateral India-Vietnam alliance at defence level is on the rise in future.



During Indian Presidents' visit to Vietnam in 2018, India and Vietnam agreed to explore a 'cooperation model'. In this model, the two have decided to explore areas where the two can achieve synergies.



## FUTURE DRIVERS OF INDO-PACIFIC REALM

The two sides have identified priority areas of cooperation.



To improve connectivity, both sides have decided to increase direct flight connectivity and even use direct shipping routes. India has committed support for Earth observatory Satellite Tracking System for environmental and science needs of both. The ISRO will establish a satellite tracking system and a data reception centre in Ho Chi Minh City at a price of 23 million dollars. The images are to be used by Vietnam for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance purposes. India will also assist Vietnam with quick impact project funds under the Mekong–Ganga cooperation.





# 8

CHAPTER

## India's Strategic and Economic Relations with Australia

### CRICKET, CHICKEN TIKKA AND SAMOSA DIPLOMACY

The land of cricket champions, Australia has loomed large on Indian consciousness. Australia was an erstwhile British colony like India and their relation started unfolding during the colonial period. During the British era, Indian labour was used in the plantations and cane fields in Queensland. India, after its independence in 1947, established a mission in Australia and the relations can be subsequently seen in three waves. From Owen Dixon (the Australian-born UN mediator in Kashmir) who once wrote to his daughter, Anne, in Melbourne that "India is a place I hope never to trust and never wish to see again" to a virtual summit between Indian and Australian Prime Minister in 2020 reflects that India now stands high on the radars of Australia.

Australia for long has been one of the neglected countries in the Indian foreign policy despite the country having a strong international weight. Australian intelligence community is globally reckoned with while its armed forces have global recognition in the field of professionalism. With its deep security and economic connections with ASEAN, Australia have a limited but a powerful sphere of influence in the East Asian world. Despite all these strengths and Nehruvian perception of Australia as an extended part of Asia (he even invited Australia in the Asian Relations Conference, 1947), the relationship in the rest of the 20th century remains alienated. India continued to neglect Australia throughout the Cold War because of its obsession with either the neighbours or striving for a seat at the global table. It is not wrong to say that for India, the guiding factor of its 20th century diplomacy with Australia was ideology over interests. This is where Chinese had gained, who promoted an engagement with Australia on the basis of interests over ideology and targeted to engage with the Middle Power (Australia) and tried to weaken its influence with the superpowers (explained later in the strategic diplomacy section of the chapter). Now, there has been a concerted effort in Indian foreign policy to liberate it from the ideological prejudice and focus on interests over ideology. India has now realised that the key to the changing global geopolitics is held by a middle power like Australia. The common membership of India and Australia in QUAD, G-20, the East Asian Summit and Indian Ocean Rim Association has increased possibilities for the two to cooperate in regional security and global diplomacy dimensions. The two sides have rightly identified cooperation in themes that range from reforms of WHO in the wake of COVID-19, to climate change to development of critical technologies. The geopolitical churn in the Indo-Pacific, due to Chinese assertion in South China Sea, has brought the two to explore a security dimension in the relationship.

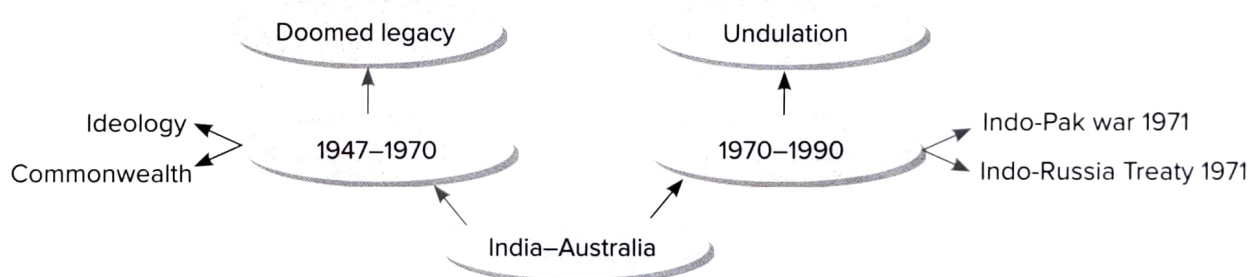
India and Australia have a relationship based on shared values, shared interests, shared geography and shared objectives and both are committed for an open, inclusive, prosperous Indo-Pacific. In fact, India can propose a new concert of maritime cooperation with the UK, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand; for the larger purpose of keeping the international waters, a global common good, free for navigation for all. This will be in sync with India's rising leading power aspirations. As Britain wants to return to the orient seas, India can propose a Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) to limit the global geopolitical imbalance in the waters. A promising future plurilateral is the idea of G-11, of Trump, that incorporates both India and Australia; a newly emerging construct to tackle emerging threats to global rules-based order. India and Australia seem to have taken the plunge now and both sides are determined to build an

ambitious template for geo-economic and a geopolitical dynamic. The two are finally connected by the Indian Ocean and united by Samosa (a reference by Scott Morrison, the Australian Prime Minister, who have made Samosa to eat over the weekend prior to his engagement with the Indian Prime Minister in a virtual summit in 2020). Indeed Samosa Diplomacy at practice!

## THREE WAVES THAT DEFINE INDIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH AUSTRALIA

**Wave 1: Foundation, Initiatives and Apprehensions** The relationship of Australia and the US goes back to 1900–1901 when both cooperated for the first time to suppress the Boxer Rebellion in China. The US and Australia fought the World War II together. India had already had its mission opened in 1944 and took this opportunity to convert it to an Indian High Commission in 1947. In 1951, the ANZUS alliance was formed between Australia, New Zealand, and the USA as a Treaty for Pacific Security. In 1954, when the SEATO was created, ANZUS was brought within its ambit but the ANZUS per se continued to be the bedrock of the US–Australia relation. Because of the ideological difference, India and Australia drifted apart.

**Wave 2: Attempts to mitigate apprehensions** In 1971, India and Australia envisaged cultural cooperation. After the Indo-Pak war of 1971 and the subsequent conclusion of the India–Russia Treaty of Friendship, the relationship began to slowdown. The dip in the Indo-Australia relations came in 1975 when Malcolm Fraser, Australian Prime Minister criticised India's proximity to the USSR. He also took a dig at India's condemnation of the US base in Diego Garcia and refusal of India to condemn Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean region.



**Wave 3: Confluence of ideas, inertia and strategic convergence** As the Cold War ended, a growing cooperative spirit began to emerge between the two nations. Both nations began to recognise shared ideals of democracy and peace. The ending of the Cold War also made India improve its relations with the US and its immediate neighbours. Both countries identified economic cooperation as an area for strengthening bilateral relations. An Australia–India Council to promote long-term interests in India was established and in 1992, a Joint Working Group on Coal was formed. In 1994, a report called 'India's economy at the Midnight Hour' was prepared. The report examined trade and investment opportunities in India and identified areas of future investment for Australia. This report acted as a strategy document for Australian businesses. In 1995, the Australian Trade Minister Bob McMullan visited India and developed Government-to-Government ties for the institutionalisation of trade. Australia has a unique way of undertaking research to fill the gap in awareness of a target market for future. Thus, the East Asia Analytical Unit in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade prepared the above report to guide future action. It also outlined education as a core area and encouraged Australian education industry to tap India on priority as a market for higher education.

## KNOWLEDGE DIPLOMACY BETWEEN INDIA AND AUSTRALIA

Australia has come out with a White Paper Plan in Education that places Hindi as one of the four priority languages along with Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian. Australia aims to equip their children with Asian languages. Australia is promoting higher education and skill development for foreign students. If we compare Australia vis-à-vis Europe in post-study work permit, part time work permit and permanent residency permits, Australia stands positive on all three areas over and above Europe. However, with relation to Indian students, Australia saw some racial attacks in 2010–2012 where Indian students were targeted on Australian territory. Australia subsequently amended its domestic laws to make punishments



very stringent for racial attacks. This created the needed impact. Australia has also undertaken a severe crackdown on fake and non-recognised universities in Victoria and other cities making education highly controlled through stringent norms. In 2014, during the visit of Tony Abbott, the Australian Prime Minister to India, he unveiled the New Colombo Plan for education. Under the plan, 1800 students from Australia will pursue internship and short programmes in India. Australia shall be training Indians in vocational skills to make them job ready in India. In 2020, Australia has abolished the 457-visa programme. Under the 457-visa programme, the Australian businesses could employ skilled foreign workers for up to four years to meet the shortage of skilled workers in Australia. Under the 457-visa programme, the employers were free to employ any number of foreigners, as there was no cap in the programme. The Turnbull administration has replaced the 457-visa programme with a Temporary Skill Shortage (TSS) visa, which would allow Australian firms access to foreign workers in a limited way. As walls turn around us everywhere, India should not fall for the hype of herds but turn the walls into an opportunity. As the future would be such where Indian workers may find it tough to work abroad, India should build up an ecosystem to incentivise foreign firms to relocate to India. To tackle rising protectionism all over the world, India should innovate its economy and ensure India emerges as a knowledge hub in the future.

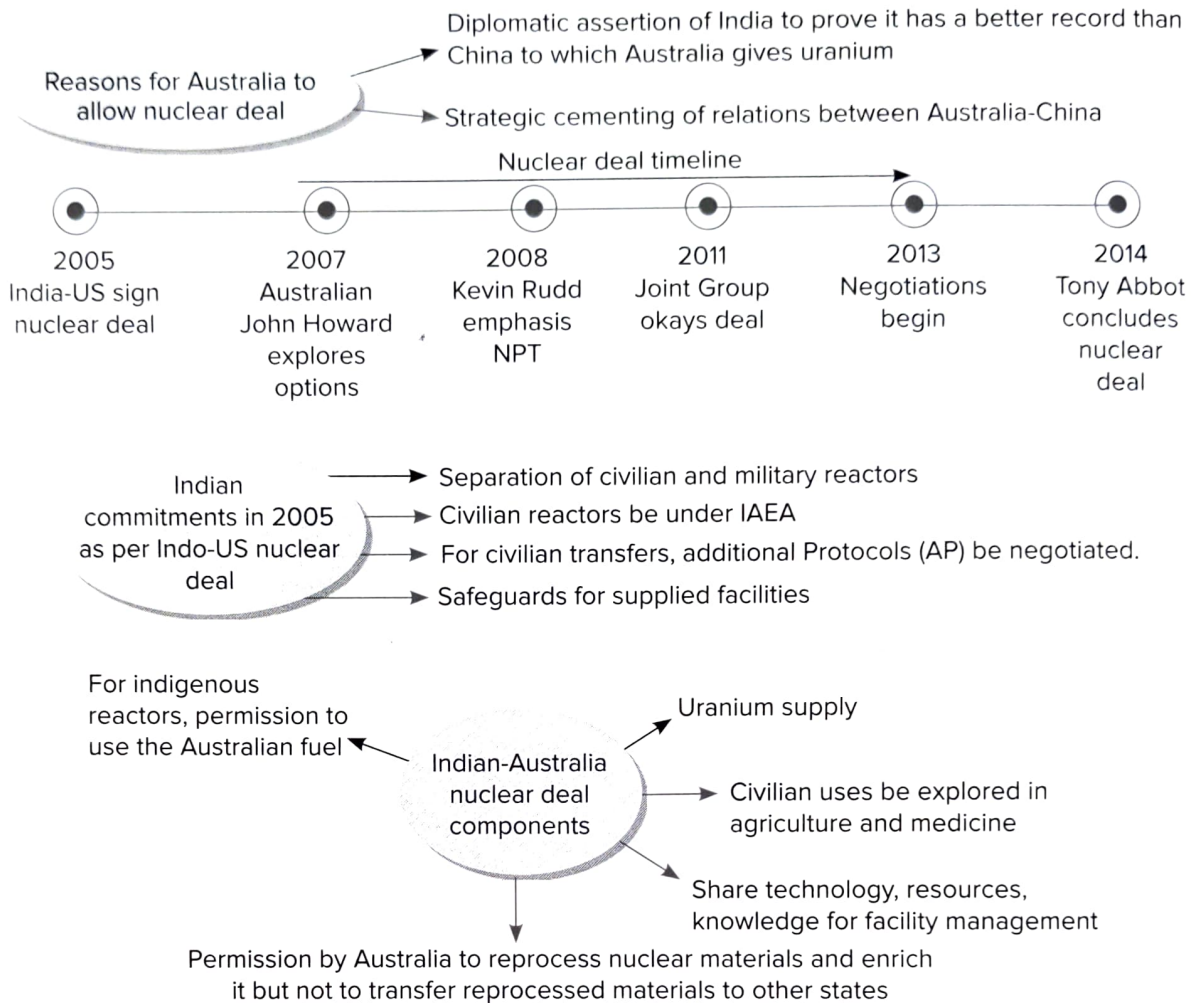
## COVID DIPLOMACY AND ROADMAP TO GLOBAL RECOVERY

In an effort to promote bilateral cooperation during the time of COVID-19 pandemic, the two sides have committed a new phase of engagement. The two have signed India–Australia Strategic Research Fund. This fund will enable both the parties to jointly identify innovative solutions to respond and treat COVID-19 and other determined priorities. The two also subsequently organised a Special COVID-19 Collaboration Round, a joint platform to discuss a joint response.

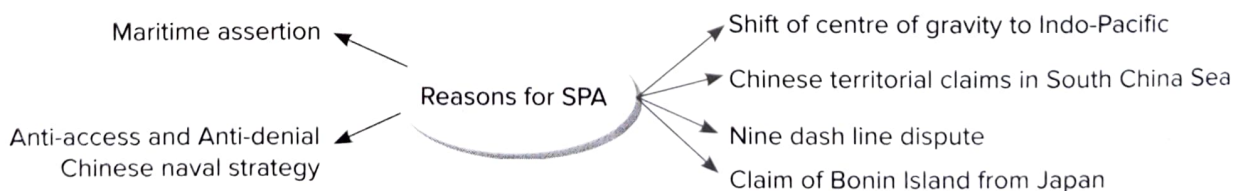
Australia is one of the few countries that have managed to combat COVID-19 so far through “controlled adaptation” by which the coronavirus has been suppressed to very low levels. Two of the leaders of this great Australia-wide effort are Indian-born scientists. Shitij Kapur, of the University of Melbourne, led a community of academics to produce a path breaking report, “Roadmap to Recovery”, while S. S. Vasan has led efforts to develop a vaccine in a Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) facility in a dangerous pathogens facility in Geelong, near Melbourne. One of Australia’s richest businessmen, Anthony Pratt of Pratt Industries, and first patron of the Australia–India Leadership Dialogue, has described the promise of DTC–CPG (direct to consumer; consumer packaged goods) that could transform global supply chains.

## NUCLEAR AND STRATEGIC DEFENCE BINDERS OF INDIA AND AUSTRALIA UNDER AUKUS

The India–Australia nuclear issue has always revolved around the NPT. Australia has a lot of uranium that India needs. However, Australia had been reluctant to supply for a long time on the basis that it was a signatory of NPT while India was not. Australia has always insisted that its nuclear supply would be conducted and in accordance to the NPT and supplies would only be granted to NPT signatories having proper safeguard agreements in place as per the IAEA. India is a non-signatory to the NPT despite having acknowledged good non-proliferation credentials. If India and Australia had any nuclear commerce, then it would mean that Australia had tried to reward non-compliance to global regimes. However, post the 2005 nuclear deal between India and the USA and Australian support to India at NSG, it has initiated a rethink. In 2011, a Joint Nuclear Group announced a policy shift for uranium exports to India for civilian use. Australia has made it clear that strict safeguards need to be negotiated upon. The change is attributed to economic gain and fear of being isolated as the US, France, Canada have already concluded nuclear deals with India. In addition, Australia has given uranium to China, which does not have a good non-proliferation record. In September 2014, Tony Abbott visited India and concluded a nuclear deal. The basis of this 2014 nuclear deal was 2005 Indo-US nuclear deal. Australia finally concluded the deal based on Indian commitments in 2005.

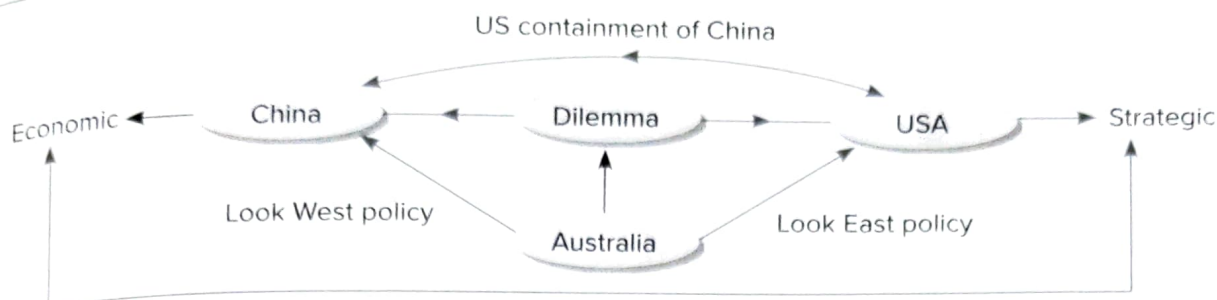


In 2009, India and Australia announced their Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) when the then Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, visited India. One important reason is an increased assertion by China in the South China Sea. Both India and Australia felt the need to cooperate at multiple strategic levels to ensure protection of sea-lanes of communication. Australia in 2012 had announced a White Paper on Defence. The title of the paper was 'Australia in the Asian century'. Australia says that the centre of gravity has shifted to the Indo-Pacific as the new theatre of commerce and power. Hence, Australia intends to explore opportunities in Asia.



Thus, the cooperation at strategic level between India and Australia can stabilise the region and both have a shared concern for China in the strategic sphere. But the more Australia undertakes commerce with China and continues to remain a US ally, the more will be the Australian dilemma in choosing a long-term relationship with India.

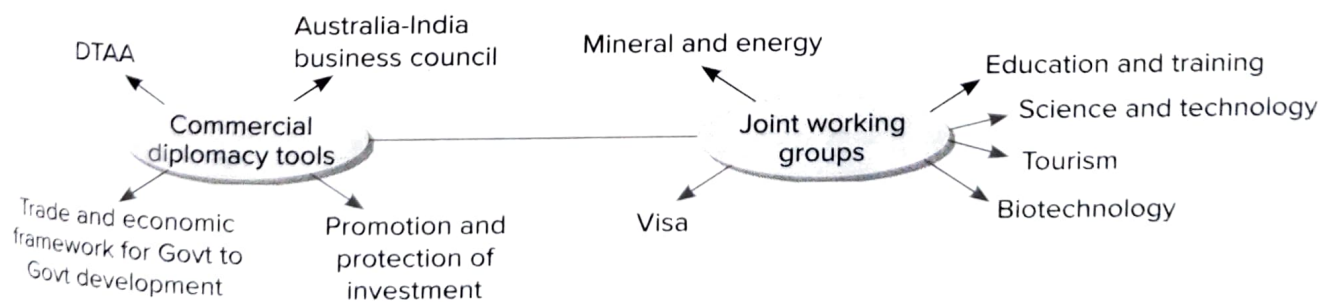




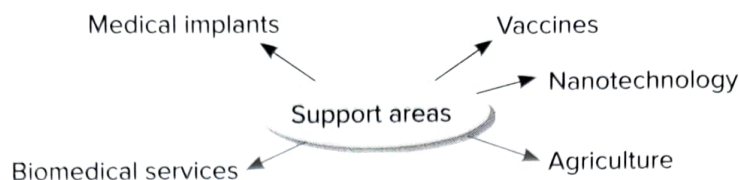
India–Australia signed a Framework for Security Cooperation in 2014. The first edition of joint naval exercise called AUSINDEX happened in 2015 in Vishakhapatnam. In June 2017, India and Australia carried out the second edition of the same in the West coast of Australia. This helped both sides lay down a foundation for a professional culture of future war fighting. Australia and India want to ensure that the dynamic Indo-Pacific region remains a region of prosperity and both sides are able to uphold a rules-based order which is challenged by unilateral action of some states (*indirect reference to China and its assertion in the region*). Both Australia and India are democracies where the leaders are accountable to the people. When democratic principles are translated and applied to foreign policy and international engagement, it gives rise to a rule-based international system based on cooperation, transparency, predictability, peace and security; which both states intend to uphold. In 2020, during the time of ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, India and Australia held a virtual Prime Ministerial Level E-Summit. An important outcome of the summit was that the two sides decided to elevate India and Australia ties to Comprehensive and Strategic Partnership Level. The two have also decided to go for ministerial level two plus two dialogue from earlier Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary Level, bringing Australia at par with the US and Japan now. The future for the two lies in exploring dimension common to both, that range from, marine research to joint development of strategic islands to building of underground domain awareness at the maritime level. The two sides also concluded a pact on cooperation in cyber-enabled critical technologies in 2020. The two also concluded the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement, which shall facilitate interoperability in the defence services and allow each other to use their bases (India has similar agreements with the US, South Korea, Singapore and France). This agreement will enable Indian military aircrafts to use the Cocos Islands (an Australian island located at choke point of Indian Ocean and South China Sea) that are located between Australia and Sri Lanka. In the 2020 Summit, Australia went to recognise India as “a preeminent maritime power in the Indian Ocean and a front rank partner of Australia”. This growing realisation of India in the psyche of Australia is driven by China factor. The interference of Beijing in Australian politics, the Chinese strategy of using trade for geopolitics have compelled Australians to have a rethink of long-term engagement with China.

## AUSTRALIA'S NEW ECONOMIC STRATEGY AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA IN AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC THINKING

As the diplomatic ties between India and Australia began to normalise, trade as a dimension picked up. India exports to Australia pearls, medical instruments and IT services and imports gold, coal, copper and vegetables.



In 2006, the Australia–India Research Fund was founded with an aim to promote bilateral research in sectors to enhance science-based collaboration. In 2014, Tony Abbott donated 20 million dollars for four years to Australia–India strategic Research Fund that had identified five support areas.



Since 2008, both have been undertaking a joint study for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and have discussed impact of tariff reduction and increased trade in services. The FTA has focused on IT, telecom, finance and tourism. Since May 2011, the negotiations for CECA began and still going on. The trade in 2020–21 stands at 21 billion dollars and needs to grow in the future.

Australia shall provide India with a stable source of minerals in the future and two sides during the 2020 Prime Ministerial Virtual Summit decided to conclude a new pact on Cooperation in Mining and Processing of Critical and Strategic Minerals. This agreement will enable the two parties to work together for future technological demand. The premise of this agreement is an understanding on working jointly on exploring new technologies for exploring and extracting minerals. With shared challenges and similar economic conditions, the two sides, in 2020, have also identified agriculture as a new challenge and have concluded India–Australia Agreement on Grain Management to reduce post-harvest losses, facilitate development of advanced logistics, rationalise costs and ensure farmer incomes are not affected at the time of COVID-19.

The New Economic Strategy adopted by Australia accepts that India is a rapidly growing economy. The geostrategic compulsion behind the strategy is the rising profile of the two states in the Indo-Pacific. With centre of economic and strategic priority shifting to the Indo-Pacific, the strategy makes an entry point at the right moment. Australia has already asserted that it will cooperate with India in 2019 in Indo-Pacific Endeavour (IPE), a maritime engagement under AUSINDEX. The report acknowledges that despite diplomatic relations between the two states have entered the first tier; the economic diplomacy is stuck as second tier. With its rising economic weight, India cannot be neglected. The strategy has asserted that Australia needs to press the reboot button to have a renewed and fresh look at India with stress on people-to-people ties and geopolitical congruence (on factors like rising China, rules-based maritime order to prevent buy or bully behaviour of hegemons, and desire of India to bring democracies together).

The report makes certain recommendations:

1. A new trade target for twenty years has been set. The target is to take the bilateral trade to 45 billion USD (which was 15 billion USD in 2020).
2. To undertake transformation in the relationship, Australia needs to increase investment in India to 100 billion USD in twenty years (from 11 billion USD today).
3. The strategy has identified 10 sectors and 10 states where Australia has a competitive edge and where it needs patience and strategy to implement.
4. The core sectors include education, agribusiness, resources, and tourism and energy, health, financial services, infrastructure, sport, science and innovation. In education, agribusiness and tourism, Australia has appointed Ministerial Champions to leverage ties with India.
5. The Indian diaspora needs to play an important role in the economic relationship.
6. The report asserts that, as CECA negotiations between India and Australia need to be fast-tracked.

## THE MALABAR HURDLE AND STRATEGIC ROADMAP FOR INDO-PACIFIC

Though India has preferred bilateral engagement with Australia, it has rejected Australia's entry into the Malabar exercises. Malabar is a trilateral naval exercise conducted between India, Japan and the USA since 1992, but Japan became a permanent member in 2015 only. The reason is that Australia initially pulled out of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, as it perceived that engaging in such a dialogue could upset Australia–China relations. Australia and China have a deep strategic and economic relationship (with the bilateral trade approximately 60 billion dollars between the two). Australia and China also signed a Free Trade Agreement in 2014. India remains concerned about strategic clarity from the Australian side vis-à-vis China. India feels that if Australia tilts more towards China at the strategic level, then by deepening its bilateral

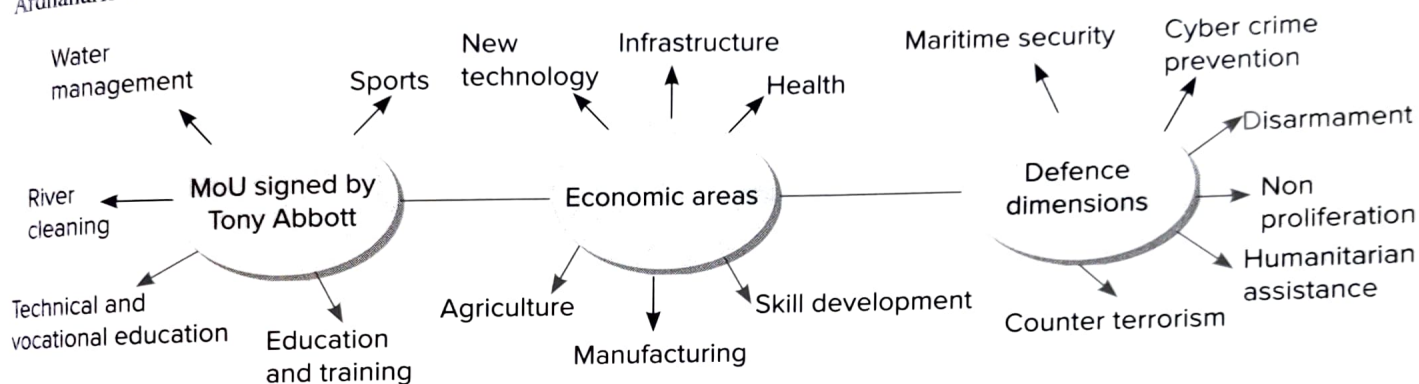


engagement with the USA and Japan in Malabar, India will be able to counter balance the influence of China. Addition of Australia in the trilateral Malabar, India feels, will not give it any tactical gain on the ground. In the near future, Australia may enter Malabar, but, as of now, India–Australia prefers bilateralism to gain strategic value.

Despite the reluctance of India to add Australia in the Malabar format, in 2020, during the Virtual Prime Ministerial E-Summit, the two sides decided to break the ice. India and Australia have signed an India–Australia Roadmap for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region to Harness Opportunities and Meet Challenges as Comprehensive Strategic Partners.

## INDIA AND AUSTRALIA: THE NEW PLAYERS OF ASIAN CENTURY

In September 2014, Tony Abbott visited India and created a roadmap for future cooperation. Australian cultural diplomacy bolstered India's faith the moment he returned idols of Chola dynasty including a Natraja idol and the sculpture of Ardhanariswara.



Australia is an energy resource-rich country. India also expressed interest in LNG, uranium, coal and gold. To enhance strategic cooperation, the two have decided to work together on 'two plus two' format of dialogue where Defence and Foreign Ministers of both states will interact. As the Australian parliament has passed the Civilian Nuclear Transfers to India Act, India has received the first batch of uranium from Australia starting 2019.

The weakest link in India's exports to Australia is in merchandise. India needs to look at three broad areas. First, despite globalisation, markets are country-specific and culturally sensitive. Indian companies will need to invest a little more in market research on Australian consumer expectations and lifestyles before their products can successfully penetrate the Australian market. Second, Australia is a brand-conscious market while India has not created a single consumer brand of international acceptance. Only when India's textiles, leather products, cars and two-wheelers, kitchen equipment and other products are visible across the world's shopping malls and supermarkets displaying their own brands that India will be recognised as a major player in the global markets. Third, innovation is emerging as the single-most important factor for sustained success in every sphere. Cricket, for instance, has incorporated the 20/20 format. Such innovations have kept the game alive and popular. Global trade cannot be different.



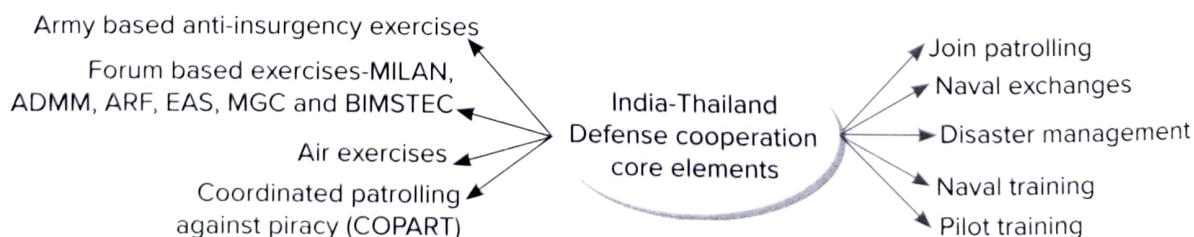
# 9

## CHAPTER

# India's Strategic and Economic Relations with Regional Powers

## INDIA-THAILAND RELATION

Historical Engagement between India and Thailand	India's core interest in engaging with Thailand	India's diplomatic strategy to engage with Thailand	Shortcomings or problems that India faces in engaging with Thailand	Future areas of potential cooperation
Indo-Thai relations go back to the ancient times when Ashoka sent a mission to Swarnabhumi to spread Buddhism. This led to a rise of cultural exchanges between India and Thailand. In 1947, the two states established diplomatic ties and Thailand became an integral part of India's Look East Policy.	Defence and security Strategic cooperation Economic cooperation	A key regional binder for India and Thailand is the BIMSTEC. The relations have been deep at the economic level between the two states as they signed an Early Harvest Scheme in 2003 that ultimately culminated into an FTA. The rise of China in the region has altered the security dynamics of the region. However, the recent Chinese assertion in South China Sea has opened up a new space of cooperation for India and Thailand. In 2012, India and Thailand concluded an MoU on defence cooperation. Its core elements are summarised in the diagram below.	The rise of China has compelled Thailand to seek cooperation in maritime security. However, India, under Look East Policy was unable to fill the space. The Act East Policy of India has positioned India as a net security provider in the region. The diagram below helps to summarise the same.	The recent AEP signifies India's strategic interest in injecting the strategic dimension into the relationship. India has already enhanced strategic control of its relationship with Vietnam, Japan, Singapore and South Korea. Thailand has emerged as the next destination, along with Indonesia, where relations can be taken to a strategic level.





# INDIA-MALAYSIA RELATION

Historical engagement	India's core interest in Malaysia	India's diplomatic strategy to engage with Malaysia	Shortcomings or problems	Future areas of potential cooperation
India and Malaysia have historic and civilisational ties. The two sides established diplomatic relations in 1957.	Defence and security Strategic cooperation Economic cooperation under Enhanced Strategic Partnership	In 1993, the two sides concluded an MoU on defence cooperation. Apart from the regular meetings of the defence secretaries of the two countries, there are regular air level and naval exercises. In 2010, the two sides concluded a CECA. As Malaysia is a member of the ASEAN, the two sides also benefit commercially due to the India-ASEAN FTA. In April 2017, the Malaysian Prime Minister visited India. He addressed a conference of Indo-Malaysia CEO forum. To further enhance the strategic partnership, the two sides have decided to augment cooperation in multilateral affairs and economic issues. In 2019, the two organised Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee and defence, security and strategic port use are its components. The Malaysia-India Business Council is a permanent forum to discuss the trade centric issues.	India imports palm oil from Malaysia and 900 million USD worth of palm oil is imported every year. In 2019, Malaysian President Mahathir voiced critical notes against India at the UNGA on India's abrogation of Article 370. This tirade against Kashmir has led India to shift over palm oil imports from Malaysia to Indonesia as a retaliatory measure.	India is concerned over shifting oil import to Indonesia because Malaysian farmers adjusted their regular cropping patterns to cater to Indian demand. However, after the Indian shift, a desired impact was visible. In 2020, Imran Khan of Pakistan visited Malaysia and during the visit, Malaysia made no mention of Kashmir. In 2020 February election, RAW ensured the defeat of Mahathir and M. Yassin won the election.

## INDIA-INDONESIA RELATION

Historical engagement between India and Indonesia	India's core interest in engaging with Indonesia	India's diplomatic strategy to engage with Indonesia	Shortcomings or problems that India faces in engaging with Indonesia	Future areas of potential cooperation
<p>India and Indonesia have a common thread through Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The depth of the cultural unification is seen from the fact that Indonesian stories base themselves on Ramayana and Mahabharata. President Sukarno and Nehru played an extremely crucial role in the birth of NAM. India and Indonesia have a Masala (spices in India) Bumbu (Bhasa in Indonesia) relation. There is need of imaginative diplomacy to revive the links between Nalanda University and Muara Jambi.</p>	<p>Necklace of Diamonds: Indonesia is a strategic pearl of India</p> <p>Maritime diplomacy</p> <p>Commercial diplomacy</p> <p>Cultural diplomacy</p>	<p>In 2018, Indian Prime Minister visited Indonesia and the relation was taken to strategic partnership level. A Shared Vision on Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific was announced by India and Indonesia where investment, disaster risk reduction cooperation and tourism were identified as core themes. To tap the economic maritime potential, a link between Andaman and Aceh has been envisaged. The recent decision of Indonesia to provide India with investment opportunity in the Sabang port strengthens Indian case for positioning itself as a Net Security Provider. There is synchronisation of Indian SAGAR initiative and Indonesian Global Maritime Fulcrum. In bringing Indonesia in the QUAD, the two sides can further strengthen the construct of Indo-Pacific. Core five sectors where Indonesia will invest in India under Make in India: airports, ports, hospitals, power plants and mining.</p>	<p>China factor: Indonesia has a close proximate relationship with China. The two have a comprehensive strategic partnership as well. The Cold War historical baggage: India still is unable to come out of the Cold War hangover that in 1965 Indonesia supported Pakistan. Border problems: India and Indonesia have not been able to settle a maritime border in the Andaman Sea. Lack of connectivity: The two sides lack air and marine connectivity, thereby a hindrance in people to people ties.</p>	<p>The strategic location of Indonesia provides India the apt opportunity to position itself as a Net Security Provider. Two have political differences in how they look at China, Belt and Road Initiative and OIC participation of India (to which Indonesia is not positive). As Indonesia is looking for recognition of its capabilities and joint ventures in defence, India can position itself as an appropriate supplier. India has sought strategic cooperation in Sumatra port.</p>

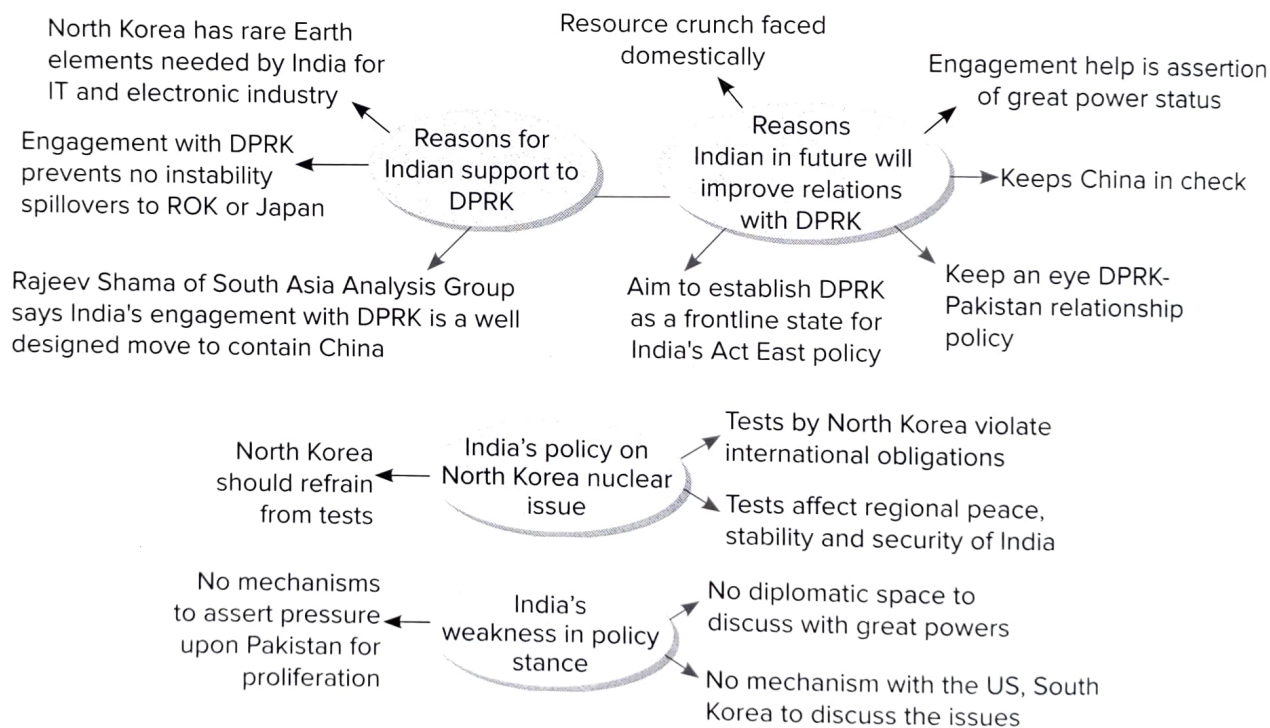


## INDIA-SINGAPORE RELATION

Historical engagement between India and Singapore	India's core interest in engaging with Singapore	India's diplomatic strategy to engage with Singapore
<p>The India–Singapore relations began during the Chola period who even named the island Singapore. Singapore was later colonised by the British and governed from Calcutta till 1965. India Singapore relations paced up since the end of the Cold War and in 2005 the two sides concluded a CECA. In 2015, India and Singapore celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations. In the same year, Indian Prime Minister also attended the funeral of Lee Kuan Yew. The foundation of the economic relationship between the two is the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) signed in 1994 (with protocols signed in 2011).</p>	<p>Necklace of Diamonds: Singapore is a strategic pearl of India</p> <p>Maritime diplomacy</p> <p>Strategic Commercial diplomacy</p> <p>Cultural diplomacy</p>	<p>In 2003, the two sides concluded India–Singapore Defence Cooperation Agreement and established a Joint Working Group on intelligence cooperation. Today, the two sides cooperate in defence at the level of maritime security and defence technologies. There have been frequent bilateral army and naval exercises under MILAN and SIMBEX formats. At the strategic economic level, to enhance strategic commercial diplomacy with India, Singapore follows a three-point strategy. Firstly, it encourages private investment to India. Secondly, it collaborates with countries like Japan and South Korea to invest in India and thirdly, India and Singapore jointly explore possibilities of investing together in other countries (mainly Africa, Latin America, and Central Asia). Singapore has complained about bureaucratic hurdles, procedural hassles and lack of transparency as some of the hurdles in commercial diplomacy. In the recent times, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, India has decided to attract global investment to make India a manufacturing hub of the world. Just like China has used Hong Kong as a collaborator to access international investment community, India has decided to use Singapore in the same way to access global finances. India is taking steps to integrate to the global economy by integrating the India Rupee through Singapore to make it an international currency. The RBI has allowed Indian firms to raise Rupee bonds abroad. Such bonds are raised in the local currency and can be settled in US Dollars. Singapore can play an important role to allow India to internationalise the Rupee. Singapore is the second largest FDI provider to India. In 2018, India and Singapore signed a bilateral naval cooperation agreement. The agreement allows India to seek naval re-fuelling (and logistical access) at the Changi naval base of Singapore. The Changi naval base is strategically located in proximity to the disputed area of South China Sea. The bilateral naval agreement focuses on increasing cooperation in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maritime security,</li> <li>• Joint naval exercises,</li> <li>• Temporary deployments in each other's naval facilities,</li> <li>• Mutual logistics support</li> </ul> <p>Changi is a critical choke point for global marine trade. The presence of India in Changi (plus Chabar on the other side) expands India's spectrum and enables India to position itself as a 'Net Security Provider'.</p>

## INDIA-NORTH KOREA RELATION

Historical engagement between India and North Korea	India's core interest in engaging with North Korea	India's diplomatic strategy to engage with North Korea
<p>The relations between India and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) are not usual diplomatic relations, though; during the Cold War some commonalities did exist.</p> <p>The origin of the relations goes back to Korean crisis in the 1950s when the Northern part of Korea invaded the South. The South as also by India condemned this invasion by North of South.</p> <p>The DPRK joined NAM in 1976 and thereafter requested India to raise the Korean issue at the NAM Summit and take up the issue of Korean reunification. In 1988, DPRK Prime Minister LI Gun Mo came to India for a good will visit.</p>	<p>Prevention of nuclear proliferation</p> <p>Access of rare earth metals</p> <p>Checkmate China</p> <p>Ensure strategic stability in East Asia</p>	<p>India advocated that the Korean issue be resolved bilaterally between ROK and DPRK and that the upcoming NAM Summit of 1977 was not an appropriate forum for the matter. DPRK accepted India's request and trusted upon advice rendered by India. At the UN Security Council, India supported action through the UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR)-82 and 83. It is interesting to note India did not support UNSCR-84, which advocated military assistance to ROK against DPRK. India aptly invoked NAM and maintained that it would not ally with any military commitments but would prefer the UN action. In April 2015, North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong visited India and met his Indian counterpart. India conveyed an intention to improve bilateral relations.</p>



For comprehensive analysis of India and Taiwan relations and issues related to US-China and Taiwan standoff, please refer to the YouTube channel of the author:  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/PavneetSinghUPSC>